

BOOK EIGHT PART THREE

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The Treasury of Knowledge

JAMGÖN KONGTRUL

THE ELEMENTS of TANTRIC PRACTICE



Elio Guarisco & Ingrid McLeod
KALU RINPOCHÉ TRANSLATION GROUP

The Treasury of Knowledge

Book Eight, Part Three:

The Elements of Tantric Practice

*A General Exposition of the Process of Meditation
in the Indestructible Way
of Secret Mantra*

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*A General Exposition of the Process of Meditation
in the Indestructible Way
of Secret Mantra*

Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé

KALU RINPOCHÉ TRANSLATION GROUP

under the direction of Khenpo Lodrö Dönyö Rinpoché

This volume translated and introduced by
Elio Guarisco and Ingrid McLeod,
annotated by Elio Guarisco,
and edited by Ingrid McLeod

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FOREWORD

Countless magnificent masters, both learned and accomplished, have appeared throughout the Himalayan region. Among them, Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé (1813-1900) holds a unique position as peerless teacher of the entire Buddhist path, free from bias toward any particular aspect. As is evident in the sutras and tantras, his life was prophesied by the Buddha, and his name has become known throughout the world.

Foremost in this great master's enlightened activities was the composition of the *Five Great Treasuries*. One of the five is the *Treasury* entitled *The Encompassment of All Knowledge*. This is an outstanding work, a comprehensive and authoritative exposition of the complete heart teachings of all aspects of Buddhism, including the three collections on discipline, exoteric discourses, and phenomenology (*vinaya*, *sūtra*, and *abhidharma*) and their three systems of training in ethics, meditation, and wisdom.

Its wide range of subjects include the secular sciences of grammar, logic, fine arts, medicine, poetics, synonymics, prosody, theatre, dance, and astrology; the extraordinary Buddhist teachings on the three paths to realization (hinayana, mahayana, and vajrayana); the ground, path, and result of the ancient and new traditions of the secret mantra path; and the teachings on view, meditation, and conduct.

The Encompassment of All Knowledge is an essential and indispensable tool for anyone wishing to study, reflect, and meditate on general and specific teachings or esoteric instructions, or to do detailed research. Its comprehensiveness eliminates the need for the time-consuming search for and consultation of many different sources.

Understanding the importance of such a work, in early 1988 the Venerable Kalu Rinpoché gathered together many of his Western students and translators and founded *Dragyur Dzamling Kunkhyab*, the International

Translation Committee. Thus began the project of translating *The Treasury of Knowledge* into English.

While the works were underway, the Venerable Kalu Rinpoché passed away and this aspect of his enlightened activity remained unfinished. In order to fulfill the wish of that Glorious Master, the Venerable Bokar Rinpoché took up the responsibility for the project, urged the translators to continue their work and to complete it as soon as possible, and offered advice on how best to accomplish that goal. Thanks to his efforts the translation of the entire *Treasury* is now nearing completion.

Two of the translators, Elio Guarisco and Ingrid McLeod, have recently finished this particular book. They applied themselves strenuously and have done a fine job of translating into English a section of Book Eight of *The Encompassment of All Knowledge*, which treats the processes of vajrayana meditation as set forth in the tantras. They have supplemented their translation with clear and detailed notes.

I am extremely pleased that this section has now been published. Moreover, I offer my heartfelt prayer that through the positive potential generated by this work, the precious teachings of the Awakened One may spread and flourish in all places and throughout all times.

Through the power of these teachings, may all the world be free from disease, famine, conflict, and war. May all types of adversity, both inner and outer, such as from dangers caused by earth, water, fire, and wind, be pacified. May all sentient beings always enjoy love, peace, happiness, and security. Above all, may all attain the precious omniscient state of full awakening.

Khenpo Lodrö Dönyö
Bokar Ngedhon Choekor Ling Monastery
Mirik, West Bengal, India
25 February 2007



Ven. KHENPO LODO DONYO

༡༣། གངས་ཅན་གྱི་སྒྲིབ་སྒྲུབ་ལམ་གྱི་ལུང་ལོ་དབང་ལྷན་གྲངས་མེད་པ་ཞིག་ཏུ་ན་པའི་ནང་ནས་འགྲན་པའི་སྒྲུབ་ཐམས་ཅད་དང་བྲལ་
 ཞིང་། རིམ་རྒྱུ་མ་མཆིས་པའི་བྱེད་བསྟན་ཡོངས་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་པའེས་གཉེན་གཅིག་ལུ་བ། རྒྱལ་བས་མདོ་རྒྱུད་དུ་མ་ནས་ལུང་གིས་གསལ་བར་
 བསྟགས་པའི་འཇམ་མགོན་ཐྱོགས་མཐའ་ལས་ ༡༧༡༩-༡༧༤༧ ཞེས་མཆོན་གྱི་སྟུན་པ་ས་ལྟེང་ཀུན་ཏུ་བྱུང་བ་གང་དེའི་ཕྱིན་ལས་ཀྱི་གཙོ་
 བོ་གསུང་རབ་མཛོད་ཆེན་མུ་པ་ལུ་ཞེས་ཡོངས་སྒྲུབ་གསལ་བའི་ནང་ཆོན་ཤེས་བྱ་ཀུན་ལ་བྱུང་བའི་མཛོད་ཅེས་བྱ་བ་ལྟེ། འདི་ཉིད་ཀྱི་བཛོད་བྱ་
 བྱེད་མེད་རིག་པའི་གནས་སྒྲུབ་དང་། ཆོད་མ། བཛོད་དང་། གསོ་བ། སྟན་པ། མཛོན་བཛོད་དང་། རྩེབ་སྒྲུབ། རྒྱུ་གས། རྒྱུ་ཕྱིན་པ་ཅས་དང་།
 རྒྱུད་པར་བྱུན་མེན་ནང་དོན་རིག་པའི་གཞུང་ཐོག་པ་གསུམ་དང་། གསང་ཐུགས་གསར་རྟོང་གི་གཞི་ལམ་འབྲས་གསུམ། ལྷ་སྒྲུབ་སྒྲིབ་གསུམ་
 སོགས་བཛོད་བྱ་བ་སྒྲུབ་པ་གསུམ་དང་རྒྱུད་བྱེད་སྟེ་སྒྲིབ་གསུམ་གྱི་ཆོས་སྒྲོ་མ་ལུས་པའི་སྒྲིབ་པོ་མཐའ་དག་མ་ཆར་བ་མེད་པར་འདུས་པའི་
 གཅིག་ཆོག་གི་གཞུང་པོ་མཆོར་ཅན། དཔེ་མང་འཛོལ་བའི་དཔལ་པ་ལ་བཞེན་མ་དགོས་པར་སྒྲིབ་དང་བྱེད་བྲག་གི་གཞུང་། གང་མ་དག་མཉམ་པ་
 སོགས་གང་ལ་གང་དགོས་སྒྲུབ་ཐོས་བསམ་སྒྲོམ་གསུམ་དང་། ཉམས་ཞིབ་སོགས་ལ་འཇུག་པར་འདོད་པའི་དོན་གཉེར་ཅན་རྣམས་ལ་མེད་དུ་མི་
 རུང་བའི་གཞུང་གལ་པོ་ཆེ་ཞིག་ཏུ་གཟིགས་ཏེ། ༡༧༥༨ ལོར། ལྷུ་བས་རྩེ་ཀ་ལུ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་མཆོག་གིས་སྒྲུབ་འཇམ་གྱི་དུ་ཀུན་བྱུང་བའི་
 ཞིག་གསར་འཇུགས་དང་འབྲེལ་བྱུང་བྱུགས་པའི་ཞལ་སྒྲོབ་དང་། ལོ་ལྷ་བ་དུ་མ་ཞིག་བསྟུ་བསྟོར་གནང་ལྟེ། ཤེས་བྱ་བཛོད་འདི་ཉིད་དཀྱིན་
 རྒྱུད་དུ་ལབ་སྒྲུབ་གནང་བྱུང་པའི་འཇུག་བསྒྲུབ་པའི་མུར། ལྷུ་བས་རྩེ་མཆོག་ཉིད་ཞི་བར་གཤེགས་པས་འདི་ཉིད་མཛོད་པའི་འཕྲོ་ཅན་དུ་
 རྒྱུར་སྒྲུབས། ལྷུ་བས་རྩེ་འཕྲོ་དཀར་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་མཆོག་གིས་དཔལ་ལྷན་སྒྲུབ་པའི་དགོངས་པ་སྒྲོང་སྒྲོང་ལོ་ལྷ་བ་རྣམས་ལ་སྒྲུབ་སྒྲུབ་འདི་ཉིད་ལུ་
 མཐུད་འཇུག་སྒྲོང་མཐར་ཕྱིན་པ་ཞིག་གང་སྒྲུབ་དགོས་ཚུལ་ལས་སྟོན་བཀའ་སྒྲོབ་སོགས་བྱགས་འཁུར་ཆེ་བ་ཞེས་ཀྱིས་ད་ཆ་ལལ་ཆེར་འབྲལ་བ་
 ཉེ་ཞིང་། ལྷག་པར་དཔལ་ལོ་ལྷ་བ་ ELIO GUARISCO AND INGRID MCLEOD རྒྱུད་གིས་དཔལ་བ་ལྷུར་སྒྲུབ་ཀྱིས་གསང་ཐུགས་རྩོ་
 རྩོ་ཐོག་པའི་སྒྲུབ་རིམ་རྒྱུད་གཙོ་བོར་བྱེད་པ་ལྷུར་བསྟན་པའི་སྒྲུབ་ཏེ། འདི་ཉིད་ཀྱི་གནས་བརྒྱུད་པ་དཀྱིན་སྒྲིབ་དུ་ལོགས་པར་ལབ་སྒྲུབ་དང་
 རྒྱག་རྒྱར་དུ་མཆོན་བྱུང་བ་ཞིབ་གསལ་བཀོད་བསྒྲིགས་ཐེན་ཏེ་རིང་མིན་སྒྲུར་བསྒྲུན་གནང་འཆར་ལགས་ན། སྟོང་ནས་དགའ་བས་རྩེས་སྒྲུབ་
 རང་དང་འབྲེལ་རྣམ་པར་དཀར་པའི་ལོགས་བྱས་འདིས་རྒྱལ་བའི་བསྟན་པ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ཕྱོགས་དུས་གནས་སྒྲུབ་ཀུན་ཏུ་རྒྱུད་པ་ཞིང་རྒྱས་པ་དང་།
 དེའི་མཐུད་ལ་བཞེན་ནས་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས་ཀུན་ཏུ་ནད་སྟག་མཆོན་འབྲུགས་དང་། འཕྲུང་བཞིའི་འཇིགས་པ་སོགས་ཕྱི་ནང་གི་རྒྱུད་པ་མ་ལུས་
 པ་ཞི་ལྟེ། འོ་མེད་བྲམ་མ་བཅུ་ཞི་བ་དེའི་དཔལ་ལ་དུས་རྟག་ཏུ་འཛོ་ཞིང་། མཐར་ཐུག་རྣམ་མཁུན་རྩོན་རྒྱལ་བྱང་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་བདེ་སྟག་ཉིད་དུ་ཐོབ་
 པའི་སྟོན་པའི་མཆོམས་སྒྲོར་ཡང་དག་པ་དང་བཅས་མཁའ་པོ་སློབ་གྲོགས་དོན་ཡོད་ཀྱིས་ ༡༩༩༧ ལྷ ༡ ཆོས་ ༢༥ ལ། ॥



TRANSLATORS' INTRODUCTION

JAMGÖN KONGTRUL LODRÖ TAYÉ
AND *THE INFINITE OCEAN OF KNOWLEDGE*

The Elements of Tantric Practice is the translation of a small part of the great treatise entitled *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge* (*Shes bya mtha' yas pa'i rgya mtsho*) together with its root verses, *The Encompassment of All Knowledge* (*Shes bya kun khyab*). The author of this work, Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé (Kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas), also known as Kongtrul Ngawang Yönten Gyatso, was one of the extraordinary nineteenth-century figures in Tibet—extraordinary in learning, realization, and influence. A master of numerous fields of classical knowledge with a special aptitude for compilation and writing, he played a vital role in the revitalization and preservation of the Buddhist teachings in eastern Tibet.¹

In his day, many of the traditions of instructions for spiritual development had become scattered throughout the Tibetan region and were close to extinction. Having received innumerable teachings and esoteric instructions and being endowed with exceptional intelligence, Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé was able to gather these rare and fragile transmissions into what are now called *The Five Great Treasuries* (*mDzod chen lnga*). These five contain massive collections of the practices, principles, and initiations of the different Tibetan traditions as well as Kongtrul's original writings.

The first *Treasury* to be produced was *The Treasury of Knowledge*, the name given to the verses of *The Encompassment of All Knowledge* and the autocommentary *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*. *The Treasury of Knowledge* was followed by *The Tantric Treasury of the Kagyu Tradition*, *The Treasury of Key Instructions*, *The Treasury of Precious Hidden Teachings*, and *The Treasury of Vast Teachings*.² The scholarship shown in this literary accomplishment of more than ninety volumes led to Kongtrul being

called Jamgön ('Jam mgon), Gentle Protector, an epithet of Manjushri, the bodhisattva who embodies higher wisdom.

Kongtrul wrote the verses of *The Encompassment of All Knowledge* in 1863 while he was living at his simple hermitage, Kunzang Dechen Ösal Ling, in eastern Tibet. He pursued the work during the short breaks between periods of meditation. He had taken on the project in response to repeated requests by the scholar Ngedön Tenpa Rabgyé (1808-1864), the first Dazang incarnation. Rabgyé urged Kongtrul to produce a treatise on the three systems of Buddhist ethics: the vows of personal liberation in the hinayana, the commitments of the bodhisattva in the mahayana, and the pledges (*samaya*) of the tantric practitioner in the vajrayana. Because there already existed several Tibetan works solely concerned with ethics (such as the famous *Detailed Exposition of the Three Vows* by Sakya Pandita), Kongtrul decided to create a book that not only set out the three systems of ethics but also contained a full presentation of all aspects of the Buddhist path from the perspectives of these three systems. Indeed, *The Encompassment of All Knowledge*, the full title of which means “a treasury of precious teachings compiled from all the systems for spiritual development: a treatise that effectively transmits the three kinds of training in higher ethics, meditation, and wisdom,” touches on all fields of spiritual knowledge as well as the related secular sciences of its day.

Kongtrul presented his manuscript of *The Encompassment* to Jamyang Kyentsé Wangpo (1820-1892), another pivotal figure in the Buddhist revival in eastern Tibet and a master from whom Kongtrul received many teachings and initiations of all the Tibetan traditions. Kyentsé declared the work to be “a treasury of knowledge... the first of your five treasures” and asked him to write a commentary on it. In the following year, Kongtrul composed his extensive commentary, *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*, revising it a year later with the help of Tashi Özer (1836-1910), the abbot of Palpung Monastery.

The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge is an achievement of enormous significance, revealing an author of unusually broad intellect and profound experiential understanding. Modeled on the great Indian treatises, it encompasses the entirety of Buddhist theory and practice as it was preserved in Tibet. Its form is that of a “word commentary” in that it cites and expands upon the words of the root verses. Because the author was dealing with such a wide range of subjects, and expounding many of them from the perspectives of a number of different systems, his presentation had to

be extremely concise in order that the work be of moderate size. The treatise contains ten books of four parts each. In the majority of the books, the subject is discussed first in the contexts of the hinayana, mahayana, and vajrayana systems, and then in terms of the ancient translation tradition in general or the great perfection (dzogchen) system in particular. In moving from one system to the next, Kongtrul demonstrates his exhaustive knowledge of the original sources by drawing from the discourses (sutras) of the Buddha, the tantras, and the treatises of Indian sages. He relies as well on a multitude of Tibetan sources. When presenting dzogchen teachings, for example, Kongtrul uses the works of Longchenpa; when he discusses the history of Buddhism, he draws on the works of Butön, Taranatha, and others.

Book One of *The Infinite Ocean* deals with the Buddha's sphere of activity, the animate and inanimate universe. The first of the four parts presents the cosmology of the mahayana system; the second, our universe from the perspectives of the hinayana and mahayana; the third, cosmology according to the Kalachakra tantra; and the fourth, the causes of cyclic life, ending with the dzogchen view of the primordial purity of the universe.³

Book Two relates the advent of Buddha, the Teacher in our world. His path to awakening is explained in part one; the different perspectives on the nature of his enlightenment in part two; the twelve deeds of the Buddha in part three; and the dimensions and realms of awakening in part four.⁴

Book Three is concerned with the nature of the Buddha's teachings. The four parts describe the characteristics of the teachings, their cycles of scriptural transmission, the compilations of the Buddha's word, and the origins of the ancient translation tradition.

Book Four gives an account of the spread of Buddhism in the world. The first part relates Buddhism's spread in India; and the second, how Buddhist monastic discipline and philosophy came to Tibet. The third discusses the origins of Tibet's eight traditions of tantric practice; and the fourth, the origins of Buddhist culture and secular sciences.

Book Five, the training in Buddhist ethics, begins with a description of an authentic teacher-student relationship as the support for one's ethical training. The second, third, and fourth parts present the vows of personal liberation, the vows of a bodhisattva, and the exceptional pledges for practitioners on the tantric path.⁵

Book Six presents the topics for study. Part one deals with the secular

sciences and worldly paths; part two, general topics of knowledge in hinayana and mahayana; part three, frameworks of Buddhist philosophy; and part four, systems of Buddhist tantra.⁶

Book Seven, the training in wisdom, begins with a discussion of the keys to understanding. The second part describes the three cycles of teaching, the two truths, and dependent origination; the third discusses the Buddhist view; and the fourth, the four reflections by which one is convinced to follow the Buddhist path.

Book Eight, the training in meditation, begins with the meditations of calm abiding and profound insight, followed by those of the cause-based dialectical approaches, and finally in the third and fourth parts, the processes of vajrayana meditation according to the tantras and the traditions of esoteric instructions.⁷

Book Nine deals with the paths and stages of spiritual development. The first part presents the paths and stages in the cause-based dialectical approaches, and the second part, those of the vajrayana. The third part describes the process of enhancement, and the fourth, the paths and stages in mahayaga, anuyoga, and atiyoga.⁸

Book Ten is an analysis of the consummate fruition state. Part one explains the fruition in the dialectical approaches; part two, the more common attainments in the vajrayana; part three, the fruition in the vajrayana; and part four, the fruition state according to the Nyingma school.

Clearly, the *Treasury of Knowledge* is “a treatise that effectively transmits the three kinds of training in higher ethics, meditation, and wisdom.” As Kongtrul points out in his introduction to the *Treasury*, training in ethics is set forth in the fifth book; training in wisdom, in the sixth and seventh books; and training in meditation, principally in the eighth book. Books one through four should be regarded as branches of the training in wisdom. Books nine and ten are related to the eighth book because spiritual development and fruition derive from the perfection of meditation.⁹

BOOK EIGHT, PART THREE, *THE ELEMENTS OF TANTRIC PRACTICE*

In Book Eight of *The Treasury of Knowledge*, the section on meditative training, Kongtrul treats the subject by presenting both the sutra approach and the secret-mantra approach. The way of secret mantra is divided into the outer systems (action tantra, conduct tantra, and yoga tantra) and

the inner (highest yoga tantra). The inner system of meditation is further divided into two traditions: one that is based mainly on tantras, and the other, on esoteric instructions.¹⁰ Of those different divisions, Book Eight, Part Three, *The Elements of Tantric Practice*, sets forth the inner system of meditation according to tantric sources. The full title of this part is *A General Exposition of the Process of Meditation in the Indestructible Way of Secret Mantra, with an Emphasis on the Tantras* (*gSang sngags rdo rje theg pa'i sgom rim rgyud gtso bor byed pa spyir bstan pa*).

The “indestructible way of secret mantra” (*gsang sngags rdo rje theg pa*) refers to the tantric path, the essence of which is the indestructible union of wisdom (the understanding of emptiness) and method (changeless bliss). The distinctive feature of this path lies in the special skill in method and wisdom employed to manifest innate pristine awareness (*ye shes, jñāna*), the primordial ground of being, or true nature of mind, which is normally obscured by discursive thought. Practice of this path requires understanding of both the theoretical and experiential contents of the tantras. It is the experiential aspect of tantra that is the subject of *The Elements of Tantric Practice*.

As is evident in the above outline, all parts of this *Treasury* are interconnected. Familiarity with the earlier sections will definitely enhance understanding of the subsequent ones. To appreciate fully the material set forth in *The Elements of Tantric Practice*, a grasp of vajrayana tenets is essential. Kongtrul's theoretical exposition of the tantric path is found in a prior section of the *Treasury*—Book Six, Part Four, *A Presentation of the Indestructible Way of Secret Mantra* (*gSang sngags rdo rje theg pa rnam par gzbag pa*). In that part, translated as *Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, Kongtrul provides an overview of the tantric path and the reasons for its superiority over other paths. The four sets of tantra of the new translation traditions, with particular emphasis on highest yoga tantra, are each presented in turn and differentiated in terms of their natures, views, ways of entry, and approaches to practice. An encapsulation of the ninefold way of the ancient translation tradition concludes the book. Prior reading of *Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, particularly the two chapters “The Nature of Mind” and “The Nature of the Body,” would greatly facilitate comprehension of the meditation processes described here in Book Eight, Part Three.

The Elements of Tantric Practice begins with a general discussion of tantric meditation and its underlying principles, pointing out the reasons why the applications of those principles can lead to the state of awakening. The

main body of the work deals with two major elements essential to all highest yoga tantras: the practice of the phase of creation (*bskyed rim*, *utpattikrama*) and the phase of completion (*rdzogs rim*, *niṣpannakrama*).

For the first phase, Kongtrul describes the visualization sequences in which ordinary perceptions are transformed into the forms of awakening, and explains how these practices purify the stages of cyclic existence—life, death, and rebirth. The creation phase prepares the practitioner for the techniques of the second phase, which entail focusing directly on the channels, winds, and vital essences comprised by the subtle body. The author presents the completion-phase systems of several different tantras, including the Guhyasamaja and Yamari, belonging to the class of father tantras, and the Kalachakra, Hevajra, Chakrasamvara, Chatuhpitha, Mahamaya, Buddhakapala, and Tara Yogini, mother tantras. All these tantras share a common goal: to make manifest the pristine awareness that is the union of emptiness and bliss. Together these practices constitute, in Kongtrul's words, "a magnificent tradition composed of teachings explicitly set forth in the tantras ...cherished by scholars and siddhas of [ancient] India who achieved total realization [by relying] on it."¹¹

What follows now is a brief introduction to the practice of highest yoga tantra and some of the key elements treated by Kongtrul in this important section of *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*.

HIGHEST YOGA TANTRA

While its principles largely originate in branches of the mahayana system, the development of the Buddhist tantric way seems to have been driven by the human need to experience reality directly, unmediated by cognitive interpretation or emotional confusion. This way therefore relies on an awareness that is an expression of the inner clarity present in one's very being and not on knowledge derived from rational, philosophical, or conceptual processes. Tantra represents a merging of different types of practice: methods of transformation, methods to gain powers, and methods that work directly with one's intrinsic awareness. These methods came from a variety of sources and gradually coalesced into identifiable esoteric transmissions.

Thus, many different systems of Buddhist tantra were developed in India and spread to other countries, flourishing in Tibet more than any other place. The most widely accepted classification of the vast canonical litera-

ture of tantras is, as mentioned above, in four sets: action tantra (*kriyā tantra*), conduct tantra (*caryā tantra*), yoga tantra (*yoga tantra*), and highest yoga tantra (*anuttarayoga tantra*). This classification of the main body of tantras translated into Tibetan and collected in the Kangyur is employed by the new translation traditions of Tibetan Buddhism (the Kagyu, Sakya, and Geluk). The first three tantras are referred to as lower tantras or outer tantras; the highest yoga tantra is considered to be an inner tantra.¹²

The ancient translation tradition (Nyingma) of Tibetan Buddhism also speaks of outer and inner tantras. Its outer tantras correspond to the three outer tantras of the above classification, that is, action tantra, conduct tantra (in the Nyingma tradition also called the “tantra of both” since it adopts the conduct of action tantra and the view of yoga tantra), and yoga tantra. The Nyingma inner tantras are mahayoga, anuyoga, and atiyoga (also called the great perfection, or *dzogchen*). The explanation of the three lower tantras is essentially the same in the new and the ancient traditions although there are some differences in emphasis in their commentaries on these tantras.

The mahayoga system of the ancient tradition corresponds roughly to the highest yoga tantra of the new traditions. Although several tantric practices including those of the Guhyasamaja and Chandraguhyatilaka are identical in mahayoga and highest yoga tantra, many of the principal deities invoked in mahayoga are not the same as those used in the highest yoga tantras. Moreover, the mahayoga practices of the creation and completion phases, while sharing the same objectives as those of the highest yoga, are substantially different. Anuyoga, the way of perfection through instantaneous transformation, and atiyoga, the way to reveal one's self-perfected state, are systems exclusive to the ancient tradition.

In highest yoga tantra, there is also a major division into father tantras and mother tantras, the Guhyasamaja being an example of a father tantra, and Chakrasamvara, a mother tantra. In general, a father or “method” tantra emphasizes the method aspect of the union of method and wisdom and employs the mantras, mandalas, and special activation rituals related to the male deities. Its immediate aim is to elicit the experience of the three stages of light and luminous clarity; its ultimate aim, the realization of the union of the illusory body and luminous clarity. A mother or “wisdom” tantra stresses the wisdom aspect of the method-wisdom union, relying on the mantras, mandalas, and special activation rituals related to the female deities (such as the deity of the Tara tantra) or those related to both the

male and female deities (such as those of the Chakrasamvara, Hevajra, and Kalachakra tantras). Its aim is to bring about the realization of the union of innate bliss and emptiness.

There are other ways of distinguishing between father and mother tantras in their treatment of emptiness and compassion, the creation and completion phases, the illusory body and luminous clarity, the cultivation of positive potential and pristine awareness, bliss-emptiness and clarity-emptiness, and so forth. However, Taranatha asserts that father and mother tantras cannot be differentiated in such ways because they both equally reveal these elements. Indeed, when one looks closely at the phases of creation and completion in father and mother tantras, one might well conclude that Taranatha is right. Some scholars posit a third category of highest yoga tantra—the nondual tantras—contending that father and mother tantras are partial in emphasizing method and wisdom, respectively, while the nondual tantras represent the perfect union of the two. Nonetheless, many great masters, including Taranatha and Rangjung Dorjé, consider this position to be incorrect and they refute the category of nondual tantras.

Etymologically, the Sanskrit word *tantra* denotes what is continuous, like the unbroken thread that runs through the fabric in traditional weaving methods. In Tibetan, the word for tantra (*rgyud*) means “continuum,” referring to the unbroken continuum of the mind of luminous clarity, or pristine awareness. In the context of highest yoga tantra, continuum is explained as threefold through division into the cause-continuum, the method-continuum, and the result-continuum, or simply the ground, path, and result. This threefold framework is derived from the Guhyasamaja tantra but applies to all highest yoga tantras and is very useful in understanding the elements of highest yoga tantra. The *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja* states:¹³

Tantra denotes what is continuous.
It is composed of three aspects:
Nature, basis, and inalienableness.
When differentiated in this way,
Nature refers to the cause;
Basis refers to the method;
Inalienableness, the result.
These three contain tantra’s meaning.

To encapsulate Kongtrul's commentary¹⁴ on the words of this verse: "Tantra" or "continuum" is the mind of awakening, known as Ever-Perfect (Samantabhadra), which has neither beginning nor end and whose nature is luminous clarity. It is "continuous" since it is present from time without beginning.

"Nature" or cause-continuum is the nature of mind, which abides, like the sky, without ever changing, from the level of an ordinary sentient being to the state of a buddha. Mind possesses three features: remaining unchanged despite obscuration; being an inner knowing whose characteristic nature is intrinsic awareness; and being supreme changeless bliss. Thus, the cause-continuum, the union of emptiness and bliss, is "cause" in that it is the fundamental stuff of awakening, and "continuum" because it exists in time without beginning or end, as the nature of mind itself.

"Basis" or method-continuum is the contributory condition for awakening. It refers to all elements of the path that allow one to progress from the awakening of one's affinity for the mahayana to the realization of the fully enlightened state. In a formal sense, it refers to the initiations that ripen one spiritually and to the path that leads to freedom. These elements constitute the "basis" because they support the attainment of the result, which is awakening, just as the earth supports the growth of new shoots. In this context, "continuum" indicates the interconnectedness of all aspects of the path: the two kinds of attainment (the immediate and the ultimate) are connected to the two phases of practice (creation and completion); the two phases are connected to the pledges and vows which support them; and the pledges and vows are connected to initiations which provide access to highest yoga tantra. "Method" is the path itself, the contributory condition for the actualization of the result (awakening), specifically the phases of creation and completion which are practiced once initiation has been received.

"Inalienableness" or result-continuum is the awakening that is the perfect fulfillment of one's own and others' welfare. It denotes becoming the agent for the welfare of others when the fundamental ground, free from all adventitious stains, becomes the result: the state of full awakening. Because the result is a permanent and continuous state, it is described as "inalienable." The result is called "continuum" owing to its continuous character: as long as space endures, sentient beings exist, and as long as sentient beings exist, the awakened state continues without interruption. It is called "result" since it represents the final goal of the tantric way.

Kongtrul points out the means to realize these three continuums: The cause-continuum is understood through the wisdom arising from broad and impartial study and reflection. The method-continuum is to be applied in such a way that it becomes a personal experience, based on meditation accompanied by intense faith and effort. The result-continuum is realized through the utmost cultivation of one's positive potential, pristine awareness, and ethics.

THE PRACTICE OF TANTRA AND THE NATURE OF MIND

The message of the Buddha—avoid negative actions, practice positive ones, train and understand your mind—is simple and direct, yet the path of tantra as a means to understanding the mind seems anything but simple. The Venerable Bokar Rinpoché, Karma Ngedön Chökyi Lodrö (1940–2004), a highly esteemed teacher with an extraordinary ability to elucidate the deepest and most complex of teachings, spoke about tantric practice as it relates to the nature of the mind and body:¹⁵

How mind is ultimately, that is, how mind is present, is the same in all beings. What is mind? It is the experiencing of happiness and suffering, the discriminating between good and bad, the thinking of thoughts.

How can we describe mind? What is its nature? Because mind is not a thing, because it is empty, we say it is the dimension of what is true, reality itself (*dharmakāya*). Because it is clear, it is the dimension of enjoyment (*sambhogakāya*). Because it is active, it is the dimension of manifestation or expression (*nirmāṇakāya*). Thus, mind, by virtue of what it is, has these three dimensions. They do not arise separately.

When we do not know mind directly, we separate out these three aspects. We also separate them for the purposes of description. They are, in fact, not separate. What mind or experience is, ultimately, cannot be understood conceptually and cannot be expressed in words. It is an immense profundity that cannot be fathomed through intellectual or conceptual processes. For this reason, Buddha Shakyamuni declared, shortly after his awakening:

Depth and peace, utter simplicity, luminous clarity not made
 of anything:
 I have made a discovery that is like the nectar of the gods.
 Why tell others about it? No one would understand.
 I will live silent in the forest.

You cannot know the peace, depth, and simplicity of mind through conceptual processes. Yet, although mind cannot be described and cannot be known by the intellect, a practitioner truly knows it in the experience of pristine awareness—knowing itself, free from the projections of thought and emotion.

We do not know mind as the three dimensions of awakened mind. For time without beginning, we have lived not knowing this. Not recognizing the emptiness of mind, the dimension of what mind ultimately is, we fall into the illusion of being some *thing*, an “I.” Not recognizing the clarity of mind for what it is, the dimension of enjoyment, we experience the natural activity of emptiness, which arises without restriction, as *other*, as external objects. Because we don’t experience emptiness and clarity as one, we live in duality: I-other, subject-object. In other words, we are subject to illusion.

You can find detailed descriptions and explanations of this fundamental misperception in the sutras and tantras. Both acknowledge that mind, by virtue of what it is, is not born and does not die. It is empty, the dimension of what is ultimately true. That being said, the tantras also describe a connection between the nature of mind and the manifestation of the physical body, a connection that depends on subtle elements.

Because we do not recognize the clarity of mind, the natural activity of emptiness, the system of subtle channels (*nāḍī*)¹⁶ arises and supports a body that seems to exist. Because we do not recognize emptiness, what mind is, the winds (*prāṇa*),¹⁷ or subtle energies, arise. Because we do not recognize that clarity and emptiness are one, the vital essences (*bindu*)¹⁸ arise.

Under the influence of illusion, the nature of our body is organized according to this system of subtle channels, winds, and vital essences. We do not know that the elements of this system are actually clarity, emptiness, and the union of clarity and

emptiness, respectively, and thus, in essence the three dimensions of awakened mind. It is only because of our confused perception that we experience clarity as the channels, emptiness as the winds, and their union as the vital essences.

The dualistic framework of subject-object experience is associated with our ordinary body, which is maintained by this system of subtle elements. The dualistic framework causes us to see mind and body as separate and different entities. Thus, our perceptions of the mind and of the body are both false. Mind or experience is the capacity for bliss, intrinsic unchanging pristine awareness. The body is the expression of the clarity of the mind. It is the form or expression of what is true. The relationship between mind as the dimension of ultimate reality and the body as the expression of that reality is like the relationship between the sun and rays of sunlight. The rays are the natural expression of the sun. They are not different in nature from the sun. When we don't know that mind and body are the two aspects of reality, and thus are of the same nature, we experience an ordinary body and an ordinary mind and experience them as two separate entities.

In order to dispel this illusion, vajrayana uses especially deep methods such as cultivating deities and reciting mantras. Right now, we are convinced that our bodies really exist. All ordinary beings have this illusion in common. To dispel this illusion, we cultivate the experience of being the deity, of having the deity's body. Whether we are practicing Avalokiteshvara, Vajravarahi, or any other deity, we think, "I am this deity." And we imagine that all beings are deities.

Mind is what cultivates this experience. What we are cultivating is the experience of having the deity's body as our body. If we don't practice this way, we remain stuck in our ordinary way of experiencing our body. Thus, we experience the body as existing as matter. Consequently, we are attached to our own body and regard other peoples' bodies with aversion, as something other. Our belief in having a material body is the source of much mental activity based on attachment and aversion.

To remedy this disturbance, we use a method of practice in which we consider our body and the bodies of all beings as

being the deity's body. When we practice this way, we don't see the deity's body as made of matter, but as empty yet appearing, appearing yet empty. Form and emptiness are one, like a reflection in a mirror or an appearance in a dream. We apply this principle to the experience of our own body as the deity's body, to the experience of others' bodies as deity bodies, and to the environment as the deity's domain of pure presence. When what arises as sensory experience is no longer perceived as matter, the mental and emotional turbulence associated with attachment and aversion no longer arises.

The deity is an expression of what is true, an expression of what mind or experience is. The cultivation of our sense of identification with the deity makes the dimension of what is true progressively accessible to us.

In the beginning, this form of meditation is a conceptual notion. Imagining our body as the deity's body, as Avalokiteshvara for example, is only a mental production. But it is still useful. As long as we are thinking, "I am Avalokiteshvara; I am not this ordinary body of matter," the turbulence of attachment and aversion subsides. As our ability in meditation is refined, the deity in our meditation appears naturally, through the inherent power of the mind. It is no longer a mental production but is the experience of appearance and emptiness arising as one, like an enchantment. This is the deity that represents what is ultimately true. In the early stages of our practice, the deity we generate is only the deity that is what appears to be true. The ultimate deity is how mind is, the bliss of awareness, which we experience free from distraction and confusion. To experience this awareness and to rest there is to know the ultimate deity. Beginners are not able to know it directly, but move closer to it because of the connection between the ultimate deity and the apparent deity.

THE QUALIFIED PRACTITIONER OF TANTRA

As Kongtrul writes,¹⁹

A person on this path of tantra must possess three special qualities: one, inalienable faith in the principles of the ground, path,

and result that constitute the vajrayana system; two, unremitting diligence in the pursuit of areas of study, reflection, and meditation with the wish to awaken within the same lifetime or at least within the intermediate period before rebirth, for the sake of all beings; and three, the supreme good fortune of being endowed with wisdom and other qualities derived from the awakening of the special potency of one's affinity for mahayana.

Kongtrul further points out that a practitioner of tantra must have three kinds of confidence: confidence in the profound path of tantra upon which one embarks; confidence in the person who leads one on the path, an authentic master; and confidence in oneself as a practitioner. Having confidence in tantra, he explains, means being convinced of the path's validity based on the fact that tantra was taught by the Buddha. Having confidence in the teacher means being convinced of his or her authenticity since the teacher holds an unbroken transmission and preserves the tantric vows and pledges. Having confidence in oneself means being convinced of one's own ability based on the various experiences arising from the efficacy of practicing the path one has learned.

Kongtrul contends that a person endowed with the first two kinds of confidence should study the tantras and their commentaries. Once having gained a sound understanding of the contents, the student should receive an authentic initiation by which he or she assumes tantric pledges and vows. The person is then ready to begin to cultivate the two phases of tantric practice: the phase of creation and that of completion. Thus, all the stages of the tantric path are contained in two steps: first, receiving initiation to bring oneself to spiritual maturity and assume tantric pledges; and second, the main element of the practice, cultivating the two phases of the path. It is by following these two steps that one achieves the third kind of confidence.

THE TWO PHASES OF TANTRIC PRACTICE

Although the highest yoga tantras differ greatly from one another in emphasis and methods of application, they all consist of the two phases of practice. Kongtrul writes:²⁰

The highest yoga tantra's distinctive features are its clarity of profound meaning in the completion phase; its infinitude of

profound methods in the creation phase; its absence of hardship in the attainment of awakening through the practice of these two phases; and its being intended for persons of exceptionally sharp faculties by virtue of these features.

Thus, the yogas of the two phases of creation and completion are distinctive features of highest yoga tantra alone, not to be found in the other classes of tantras... since only the highest yoga tantra provides a path that corresponds to the complete process of birth in cyclic existence... a path of training that leads to perfect [recognition] of genuine luminous clarity [at the time] of death.

Kongtrul describes the creation phase as a path based on the deliberate effort of thought. Its essential nature is the deity's form, which represents inseparable appearance and emptiness. Its distinguishing feature is meditation whose steps correspond to birth, death, and the intermediate state, the three processes in cyclic existence. The completion phase is a non-conceptual path. Its essential nature is pristine awareness, made manifest when winds and mind have entered, abided in, and dissolved in the central channel.

The term "creation" (*bskyed*), derived from the Sanskrit *utpatti*, denotes that which is created or fabricated by thought. "Phase" (*rim, krama*) refers to a step or stage in the path, a "yoga." The phase of creation is also known as the phase of imagination, the fabricated yoga, or the conceptually created yoga. The term "completion" (*rdzogs*), from the Sanskrit *niṣpanna*, means that which is ultimately true, the natural state, or the true nature. What is meant, Kongtrul explains, is a state with which one has to become familiar—not a new state of mind developed through practice, but one already fully present in the mind stream of every being: the pristine awareness of luminous clarity, the union of bliss and emptiness. The phase of completion is also called the nonconceptual yoga or the yoga of the natural state.

Kongtrul points out that an ordinary person "entangled in the net of discursive thinking" would not be able to train in the completion phase, since it does not involve thoughts. Therefore, one first purifies the ordinary thought process by means of the yoga of creation, which entails the imagination of the deity and the mandala. Then, when one has understood the nature of thought, one embarks on the cultivation of the phase of comple-

tion. In other words, until the practitioner has given rise to an exceptionally stable realization of the natural state—the unfabricated completion phase—he or she must rely on the fabricated creation phase and employ imagination. Once realization has arisen, however, it is no longer necessary to deliberately cultivate ordinary types of creation-phase practices. Kongtrul compares this sequence of creation followed by completion to using a boat to cross a river but dispensing with it once one has reached the opposite shore.

THE CREATION PHASE

Kongtrul begins his treatment of the creation phase by identifying what is to be accomplished through its practice: the overcoming of ordinary and habitual perceptions and fixation on these perceptions. Three elements are required for this practice to be effective: a clear image of the deity's form; divine pride (the sense of actually being the deity); and the view that what arises in meditation is like an illusion. The first element is an antidote to ordinary form; the second, an antidote to concepts such as self-identity and ordinary human pride; and the third, an antidote to regarding experience as inherently real. In other words, these elements are the means to transform, or in tantric terminology, "purify," all aspects of ordinary existence: living, dying, being reborn, one's body, environment, fellow beings, possessions, enjoyments, and activities.

The creation of the deity's form in the transformation of impure perceptions into a pure mandala may be achieved through several different methods. Some methods are gradual, as in the visualization of a seed-syllable from which arises the hand implement, or insignia, of the deity, which then changes into the deity. Others are instantaneous, as in the visualization of the deity appearing suddenly, "like the flash of a fish as it springs from water." Kongtrul notes that the gradual approaches are intended for average practitioners while the sudden approach should be attempted only by someone possessing the sharpest faculties.

These creation methods are integral parts of visualization sequences found in the various tantras. Each tantra describes its own visualization sequence in terms of that tantra's particular framework or system of organization. Some commentators have invented their own frameworks to explain different tantras. Kongtrul discusses these frameworks at length. He starts with the threefold framework made up of three contempla-

tions called the initial union, the supremely victorious mandala, and the supremely victorious action. The first contemplation involves imagining oneself as the principal deities, male and female, from whom emanate the other deities of the mandala. It includes all the steps of the visualization, from the creation of the mandala residence up to the creation of the principal male and female figures. The second contemplation involves visualization of all of the deities of the mandala, who have emanated from the principal deity figures, and the arrangement of the deities in their respective places. The third contemplation consists of imagining the deities in action, as in the purification of realms. This framework of three contemplations is applied in the Vajramala, Chakrasamvara, Hevajra, Guhyasamaja, Chatuhpitha, Mahamaya, Buddhasamayoga, and Buddhakapala, that is to say, in most highest yoga tantras (although each tantra presents its own interpretation).

One of the most important of the remaining frameworks set forth by Kongtrul is that of the four branches: familiarization, near attainment, attainment, and great attainment. This framework is applied in the Guhyasamaja (both the Arya and Jnanapada traditions), the cycle of Chakrasamvara, the Hevajra, the Yamari tantras, and others. Another framework of great importance comprises four yogas (the first, the subsequent, the superior, and the great yoga) and is applied in the Buddhasamayoga and the Red and Black Yamari tantras. Finally, Kongtrul presents an elaborate framework formulated by Jalandhara and Rahulaguhyā²¹ consisting of thirty-two steps by which one attains a pure form adorned by the thirty-two signs of awakening. The methods contained in each of these frameworks encompass all aspects of the creation phase.

Drawing on these tantras and commentaries, Kongtrul discusses many details of the creation-phase practice including suitable places, times and durations of practice, and the materials required for practice. For general purposes, most tantras advise staying "in a place that is secluded and pleasant" to accomplish general purposes. They also describe the types of places to be used for specific purposes. Kongtrul recommends that, above all, the place one chooses be a region in consonance with one's own disposition. As for the times for practice, Kongtrul points out that most beginners will more easily achieve clarity in visualization by cultivating the practice at night. Once such clarity has been stabilized, one can meditate at any time. While in retreat, the practitioner must never be without certain essentials, such as qualified assistants, ritual articles, nourishing food and drink and

adequate clothing. More than anything, the practitioner needs fortitude, which Kongtrul defines as “unrelenting perseverance that, despite adverse circumstances and even at the risk of one’s life, is never relaxed until the intended goal has been achieved.”

Kongtrul then describes the actual practice of the creation phase. He outlines the steps needed to prepare the practitioner for the main practice: the offering of sacrificial food to dispel interferences; the visualization of a circle of protection; generating the mind of awakening to develop positive potential; and meditating on emptiness to cultivate pristine awareness.

The main practice begins with the creation of the celestial palace of residence. According to most tantras, the base for the creation of the palace is the visualization of a tetrahedral *dharmodaya*²² and the tiers of the four elements. The celestial palace itself is generated from a syllable, an insignia, or the melting of a deity’s form. Some tantras describe charnel grounds along with particular trees, guardians, and so on, to be imagined outside the celestial palace.

The next step is the creation of the entire array of the resident deities. Three main procedures are followed: creation by means of the five actual awakenings; creation in four vajra steps; and creation by means of three vajra rites.

Creation by means of the five awakenings entails five steps that represent the five pristine awarenesses. The first is the generation of a moon, referred to as “awakening by means of mirror-like pristine awareness”; the second, of a sun, “awakening by the pristine awareness of sameness”; the third, of the seed-syllable and insignia, “awakening by the discerning pristine awareness”; the fourth, the merging of all these elements, “awakening by the pristine awareness of accomplishment”; and fifth, the full manifestation of the deity’s body, “awakening by the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena.”

Creation in four vajra steps entails meditation on emptiness; generating a moon, sun, and seed-syllable from which light emanates and then converges; the full manifestation of the deity resulting from the convergence of the light and transformation of the seed-syllable; and visualization of three syllables at the deity’s three places.²³

Creation by means of three vajra rites involves imagining the deity’s seed-syllable; the seed-syllable’s transformation into the deity’s insignia; and the insignia’s transformation into the full manifestation of the deity’s body.

The majority of tantras include the step known as the placement of the three beings, the pledge-being, the pristine-awareness being, and the contemplation-being.²⁴ The pledge-being means the particular deity generated through the ritual, that is, the deity who is the object of meditation. At the heart of the pledge deity is the pristine-awareness being, imagined as a deity identical to the pledge deity; as a deity differing from the pledge deity in color, appearance, or number of faces and arms; or as an insignia arisen from a seed-syllable. At the heart of the pristine-awareness being is the contemplation-being, visualized as the seed-syllable or insignia. In some tantras, the placement of the three beings is enacted for all the deities; in others, for only the principal deities.

Kongtrul also reveals a number of steps that complete the creation-phase meditation. The step of absorbing the pristine-awareness mandala into oneself dispels the notion that oneself and the pristine-awareness deities are separate, and reinforces the "pride" of being indivisible from them. Conferral of initiation cleanses oneself of impurities and establishes the potency required to accomplish the ultimate goal of the tantra. The different types of sealing,²⁵ such as the deity being sealed by the lord of a buddha family, ensure that meditation is carried out without misidentification. The tasting of nectar, offering, and praise, for which there are many variations from one tantra to the next, bring about the understanding that all objects of experience, the sensory pleasures, and so forth, are the pure expressions of bliss and emptiness.

Kongtrul explains that all the varieties of the creation phase incorporate the four key elements of form, imagination, result, and transformative power. "Form" means meditating on forms that represent the aspects of awakening and generating clear images of these forms, thereby stopping impure appearances. "Imagination" means using the force of creative imagination to convert the visualized forms of awakening into reality. "Result" means meditating on the result, that is, the very goal to be attained, and thereby achieving that goal. "Transformative power" means turning the ordinary body and mind into pristine awareness by relying on the transformative powers of awakened beings. Among these, Kongtrul points out, the most important element for realization of the path is the transformative power of the vajra master combined with one's own devotion to that master.

In addition to those four key elements, creation-phase practice requires the development of clarity in visualization. To that end, one repeatedly

brings forth clear images in both the coarse and subtle aspects of visualization. Moreover, one practices the meditation while firmly identifying with the deity. As one trains in the phase of creation, one must understand that the entire mandala is like an illusion, devoid of inherent nature, ultimately emptiness. Finally, one must manifest the pristine awareness in which the appearance of the deity (along with the certainty of being the deity) arises unceasingly as the essence of bliss and emptiness.

The practitioner who grows tired from the effort of visualizing the deity is advised to introduce a new element: the recollection of the pure nature of the deity. This means to recall the symbolic meanings of the different elements in the visualization, which represent the great qualities of the buddhas. For example, in meditation on Avalokiteshvara, one would recall that his single face symbolizes the single taste of all phenomena, his four arms symbolize the four boundless qualities of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity, and so on. Bringing to mind the purity of these attributes counteracts the notion that the attributes of the path and those of the result are different.

The phase of creation ends with the dissolution of the visualization. The mandala residence and resident deities dissolve into oneself. Then, one dissolves gradually into luminous clarity, once again to emerge as the deity.

All the above steps of meditation are means of transformation or purification. The fields or objects of the purificatory process include all aspects of the three processes of dying, experiencing the intermediate state between death and birth, and taking birth and living one's life. As Kongtrul elucidates, each purificatory step acts on a corresponding aspect of ordinary existence that is to be purified.

For example, the cultivation of positive potential in relation to the deity corresponds to and purifies the accumulation of karma in the previous life that would lead to rebirth in a particular existence. The meditation on emptiness, which cultivates pristine awareness, corresponds to and purifies the dissolution of the coarse and subtle constituents at the end of life. These and other steps apply to the process of dying.

The visualizations of the tiers of elements, the celestial palace, and seat of the deity correspond to and purify the world into which the intermediate-state being will be born. The generation of the principal male and female deities purifies the vision of the future father and mother. Imagining three syllables marking body, speech, and mind purifies the vision of

the parents in the act of copulation that leads to conception in the womb. These and other steps apply to the intermediate state.

Visualization of the seed-syllable (for example, as part of the five awakenings) purifies the five stages in the human womb. Visualization of the deity's form through the steps of the seed-syllable, the insignia arising from the seed-syllable, and so forth, purifies the habitual tendencies accompanying embryonic and fetal development. Visualization of the pledge-being purifies habitual tendencies pertaining to the coarse temporal body composed of elements. Visualization of the pristine-awareness being purifies habitual tendencies related to the most refined aspects of the channels, winds, and vital essences of the body. Visualization of the contemplation-being purifies the habitual tendencies related to the innate body, the subtle body consisting of wind and mind alone. These and other steps apply to being born as a human.

The step of drawing in the pristine-awareness deities purifies the newborn's ability to discern the details of perceived objects. The conferral of initiation purifies the newborn's earliest experience of being washed and of acting independently. The act of sealing purifies the child's experience of being in its own family. The offering ritual purifies the child's experience of pleasure, which arises as desire and craving, as the sense faculties develop. The uttering of praise purifies the experience of being praised by others in society. The recitation of mantra purifies ordinary breathing and conversation based on confused ideas. These and other steps apply to living one's life as a human. The last steps—the dissolution of the mandala and re-emergence as the deity—purify the experiences of the end of life, the stages of dying, the entrance into the state of luminous clarity, the re-emergence as the mental body of the intermediate state, and the taking of rebirth.

Finally, the purificatory means acting on their objects bring about the corresponding results of the purification process. Kongtrul explains that the place where one attains enlightenment corresponds to the creation of the celestial palace and related steps in the meditation practice. The manner of attaining enlightenment corresponds to the creation of the deity by means of the five awakenings, or other creation methods. The deeds and activities performed subsequent to enlightenment correspond to the steps of offering, praise, recitation of mantra, dissolution of the mandala, post-meditation activity, and so forth.

The following words of the outstanding master Longchenpa (1308-1363), considered to be the most brilliant teacher of the Nyingma school, encap-

sulate the three components—the means, objects, and results of purification—of the creation phase:²⁶

One imagines one's environment as a celestial palace, thus purifying the ordinary apprehension of appearances as inherently existent, as stones, earth, and so forth. One imagines sentient beings as male and female deities, thus purifying one's belief in beings as inherently existent and dispelling one's attachment to some and aversion to others. One imagines all one's own psychophysical constituents as deities, their primordial nature, thus purifying oneself of obstacles to the attainment of the form dimensions of awakening, generating positive potential, developing meditative tranquility, and accruing many other benefits.

THE COMPLETION PHASE

The term “completion phase” denotes a nonconceptual yoga, or yoga of the natural state, and is described as being unfabricated, effortless, not involving thought or imagination. Thus, the reader might well be surprised by the complexity of the completion-phase methods presented in this work. It would be helpful to know that the term is used in three different contexts:

First, the dissolution of the visualization at the end of the creation phase together with the resting of the mind in its own nature is called the completion phase. It is possible for some practitioners of exceptionally sharp faculties to attain the true completion phase (as in the third context) as a by-product of creation-phase practice.

Second, the special techniques focused on the subtle vajra body that cause winds normally flowing through the right and left channels to enter the central channel are also called the completion phase, translated by some as the “completing phase.” These methods allow the practitioner to become familiar with the experience of pristine awareness and move toward completion or perfection of the path. “Completion phase” in the present work refers primarily to the systems comprising these methods. Many of them are similar in form to those used in creation-phase deity yoga: one is instructed to visualize a mandala, to imagine oneself as a deity, and so forth. It is important to keep in mind, as Tsongkapa points out,²⁷

that “deity yoga should be taken as applicable to both stages [creation and completion].” In the completion phase, however, the effort of imagination falls away as one’s meditation becomes more refined.

Third, the actual realization of the natural state, the ultimate goal of tantra, when the winds have dissolved in the central channel and authentic pristine awareness has been made manifest, is called the completion phase. In this last context, the form of the deity vividly manifests as the essence of bliss and emptiness, without the requirements of effort and imagination. It is completion in the sense of being the end of the path. More will be said on this third context below.

Kongtrul begins his discussion of the completion phase by identifying the root of the path. In the context of the mahayana system, the root is bodhichitta, the altruistic mind of awakening. In the vajrayana, particularly in its completion phase, the root of the path is held to be the “union of an uncommon emptiness and an uncommon compassion.” This union is referred to as “bodhichitta” in the sense of a pure awareness that is “the ultimate object to be known, the ultimate focus of meditation, and the ultimate result.” The tantras clearly state that this union represents the essence of all their teachings.

In the completion phase, emptiness and compassion are specifically defined. Their union, Kongtrul states, forms the root of the path because the two elements overcome the extremes of existence and perfect peace: uncommon emptiness cuts through the elaborations of conceptual grasping; uncommon compassion ensures that the welfare of sentient beings is never abandoned. This inseparability of emptiness and compassion, known as the “vajra yoga of the method-wisdom union,” is present throughout the stages of the ground, path, and result. The nature of reality at the ground stage is that of the essence of that union. The path or method used for realizing this pristine awareness incorporates the qualities of the union. Finally, the resultant pristine awareness is of the essential nature of the union.

Having established the root of the path, Kongtrul explores in detail the natures of emptiness and compassion in this context. The emptiness to be contemplated in the completion phase differs from the emptiness understood as the two truths of no-self taught in the mahayana. It is not grasped through analysis or dialectical approaches but is intuited through various visions experienced by the yogin in the course of practice, which also appear naturally to ordinary people at the time of death. These visions are manifestations of an uncommon emptiness, luminous clarity itself.

Kongtrul describes this uncommon emptiness as endowed with all aspects of the three realms, spontaneously appearing like magical reflections in a divination mirror, while its own nature remains free of concepts, free of inherent reality. Uncommon emptiness is characterized as the “abode of great bliss” because when focused on and directly experienced, it has the power to bring forth the pristine awareness whose nature is great bliss. Thus, uncommon emptiness is cultivated in the completion phase because it alone can generate unchanging bliss.

Since the pristine awareness whose nature is great bliss manifests from uncommon emptiness and is free from all conceptual elaborations of dualistic experience, one might conclude that it is an emptiness devoid of appearance. However, Kongtrul makes it clear that this is not the case. It is rather the ineffability of pristine awareness itself that arises as the circle of deities of the mandala, and as everything in cyclic existence and in the state of liberation. Moreover, as Kongtrul writes, this manifestation is “not a relative appearance, karmic appearance, or delusory appearance, but is a manifestation of pristine awareness, of reality itself, the primordial nature.” This same point has been illuminated by Bokar Rinpoché:

In the beginning, meditation is a conceptual notion. Imagining our body as the deity’s body, for example as Avalokiteshvara, is only a mental production. But it is still useful... As our ability in meditation is refined, the deity in our meditation appears naturally, through the inherent power of the mind. It is no longer a mental production but is the experience of appearance and emptiness arising as one, like an enchantment. That is the deity that represents what is ultimately true.

Thus Rinpoché first describes the creation-phase deity yoga based on the effort of thought, and second, the unfabricated completion phase in which the deity arises naturally through the pristine awareness that is luminous clarity, without the effort of thought.

The “uncommon compassion” to be cultivated in the completion phase is not the same as ordinary compassion—or even the great compassion spoken of in the hinayana and mahayana systems—which does not by itself enable one to transcend cyclic existence. Here, compassion primarily means the compassion that exists in union with emptiness. This compassion of union is defined as changeless great bliss, the very bliss that

arises from the uncommon emptiness just described. Great bliss is a distinguishing feature of the completion phase. Kongtrul notes that this bliss is appropriately referred to as “great compassion” because it overcomes the suffering of oneself and others, and to fully protect all suffering beings is the characteristic of great compassion.

THE COMPLETION PHASE IN FATHER AND MOTHER TANTRAS

In the next section of the book, Kongtrul sets forth the various tantras' particular completion-phase systems, beginning with those in the father tantras. Father tantras are divided into three families: desire tantras, delusion tantras, and aversion tantras.²⁸ Although this threefold division is also found in the mother tantras and the lower tantras, it is emphasized mainly in the father tantras.

To the family of desire tantras belong the Guhyasamaja tantra, some of the Yamari tantras, and others that Kongtrul does not present here. These are considered desire tantras because they stress the use of sexual desire on the path. They are intended for persons who are dominated by the emotional affliction of desire.

To the family of delusion tantras, of those translated into Tibetan, belongs *Chanting the Names of Manjushri*.²⁹ This is considered a delusion tantra because it teaches methods to purify delusion and is intended to treat persons whose strongest affliction is delusion.

To the family of aversion tantras belong the Vajrabhairava and other tantras. These teach the use of aversion as the path. This does not imply that they employ the visualization of wrathful deities only and the application of wrathful rites to the total exclusion of the path of desire, but that they place less emphasis on these elements than do the tantras of desire.

The first completion-phase system presented by Kongtrul is that of the Guhyasamaja, a father tantra of the aversion family. Of the twenty-four variants of the Guhyasamaja propagated in India, only six were introduced into Tibet: those of the traditions of Nagarjuna, Buddhajnanapada, Shantipa, Vajrahasa, Padmavajra, and Anandagarbha. In this book, however, Kongtrul discusses only the most important and well known traditions of the Guhyasamaja completion phase, those of Nagarjuna and Buddhajnanapada. Nagarjuna evidently received the oral transmission of the Guhyasamaja from Rahula (Saraha) who, as far as we know, did not himself write on

this subject. The Guhyasamaja completion phase that derives from Nagarjuna is known as the Arya tradition (*'phags lugs*) and comprises five stages. This tradition is based on commentaries written by Nagarjuna himself as well as his followers such as Nagabodhi and Aryadeva. Buddhajnanapada is said to have received teachings directly from Manjushri and transmission from Manjushrimitra. His completion phase is known as the Jnanapada tradition (*ye shes zhabs lugs*) of four yogas. Some of his followers, such as Dipamkarashribhadra and Vitapada, wrote lengthy commentaries on the works of Buddhajnanapada.

In his treatment of the cycle of Yamari tantras, also father tantras, Kongtrul discusses a general completion-phase system formulated by Shridhara that is related to three tantras, Red Yamari, Black Yamari (both wrathful forms of Manjushri), and Vajrabhairava; a special Red Yamari completion phase based on the oral teachings of Virupa; and the Black Yamari completion phase of Lalitavajra as elucidated by Devakarachandra.

Kongtrul next turns to the highest yoga mother tantras. The mother tantras form the six families known as Vajrasattva, Vairochana, Heruka, Vajraditya, Padmanvarteshvararaja, and Ashvottama. Each of these families is related to one of the principal buddhas and embodies the qualities of that buddha. Heruka refers to Akshobhya; Vajraditya, to Ratnasambhava; Padmanvarteshvararaja, to Amitabha; and Ashvottama, to Amoghasiddhi. The Kalachakra, Buddhasamayoga, and Secret Moon Essence are examples of tantras that belong to the Vajrasattva family. The Chatuhpitha is the only tantra of the Vairochana family translated into Tibetan. The Chakrasamvara, Hevajra, Mahamaya, Buddhakapala, as well as others not mentioned by Kongtrul, belong to the Akshobhya family. The Vajramrita belongs to the Ratnasambhava family; the Kulalokanatha, to the Amitabha family; and the Tara Yogini tantra, to the Amoghasiddhi family.

Kongtrul begins his treatment of the mother-tantra systems with the Kalachakra completion phase of the six vajra yogas, which constitute the very heart of all Kalachakra teachings and are preserved in seventeen different lineages. He then concisely presents the eight autonomous systems of Hevajra: that of Virupa (as found in the path-and-result teachings), Dombi Heruka, Saroruha, Samayavajra (also known as Krishnasamayavajra), Naropa (as found in the Marpa tradition), Maitripa (as found in the Marpa tradition), Vyadalipa, and Shantigupta (as transmitted to Taranatha). The Chakrasamvara completion phase is then presented in

the versions of the three traditions most famous in both India and Tibet and whose transmissions of initiations remain unbroken: the traditions of Luipa, Ghantapa, and Krishna. Then, each in turn, Kongtrul presents the Vajra Chatuhpitha completion phase based on the traditions of Aryadeva and Bhavabhadra; the Mahamaya completion phase as formulated by Marpa and Ngoktön; the Buddhakapala completion phase derived from the teachings of Saraha; and the Tara Yogini completion phase of four yogas.

As mentioned above, in the preparation of the *Treasury of Knowledge* Kongtrul draws from numerous sources. His choices reflect the masters who most influenced him, one of whom was the extraordinary Taranatha (1575-1634),³⁰ a prolific writer whose works are contained in seventeen large volumes. It seems evident that Kongtrul felt immense respect for this “Venerable Jonang Master,” perhaps more than for any other lineage holder, and that he adhered fully to Taranatha’s views. Cited frequently in the *Treasury*, the writings of Taranatha constitute the very foundation of all Kongtrul’s writings on the tantric teachings of the new translation traditions. The present section on the systems of the completion phase is based almost entirely on the works of Taranatha, which record in precise detail the meditation instructions related to the systems.

Kongtrul’s explanation of the Arya Nagarjuna completion-phase tradition of Guhyasamaja is a summary of Taranatha’s *Guhyasamaja, Arya Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Five Stages Transmitted through Gö Lotsawa*. His explanation of the Jnanapada tradition summarizes Taranatha’s *Guhyasamaja, Jnanapada Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Indivisibility of Clarity and Profundity*.

The common completion phase of the Red Yamari is a summary of Taranatha’s *Yamari, Red, Manual of Instructions on the Four-Yoga Practice*; the special Red Yamari completion phase summarizes his *Yamari, Red, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase*; and the Black Yamari completion phase, his *Yamari, Black, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase according to the Zhang Tradition*.

The Kalachakra completion phase of the six vajra yogas is largely taken verbatim from Taranatha’s *Meaningful to Behold: Manual of Instructions on the Indestructible Yoga’s Profound Path*. The Hevajra completion phase of the Marpa tradition is a summary of Taranatha’s *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*; that of the Vyadalipa tradition, of his

Hevajra Tantra Esoteric Instructions on the Four Seals of the Completion Phase; that of Shantigupta tradition, of his *Hevajra Tantra Manual of Instructions on the Four Principles of the Completion Phase*; and that of the *Single Lamp* instructions, of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra Esoteric Instructions on the Completion Phase*.

The Chakrasamvara completion-phase traditions of Luipa, Ghantapa, and Krishna are summaries of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra, Luipa Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase*; *Chakrasamvara Tantra, Ghantapa Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Five Stages in the Completion Phase*; and *Chakrasamvara Tantra Exegesis of the Essence of the Teachings of Krishnacharya on the Four Stages of the Completion Phase*.

The Chatuhpitha completion phase is a summary of Taranatha's *Chatuhpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*; the Mahamaya completion phase, a summary of his *Mahamaya Tantra Manual of Instructions: The Excellent Path of the Victorious Ones*; the Buddhakapala completion phase, of his *Buddhakapala Tantra Instructions on the Completion Phase*; and the Tara Yogini completion phase, of Taranatha's *Tara Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*.

THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE COMPLETION PHASE

Thus, Kongtrul introduces the reader to the completion-phase systems of many different tantras. However, as he points out, the underlying process is the same for all of these systems, with each step depending on prior completion of the previous one. The process begins with bringing the channels, winds, and vital essences under control, making them “workable” or serviceable. Such control allows effective practice of the relative element, the completion phase of the inner fire and the illusory body, called “self-consecration,” and the ultimate element, the completion phase of luminous clarity. Cultivation of the relative and ultimate elements allows one to effect the dissolution and manifestation of the deity, the practice whereby the illusion-like body of the deity is dissolved into luminous clarity and then made to reappear as the union of emptiness and appearance. Attainment of that union, which still requires training or refinement, is the direct cause for the attainment of the goal of union beyond training, the utterly pure body of pristine awareness.

Although all systems utilize this process, some differences in execution

exist. In order to make the channels, winds, and vital essences workable, a practitioner of the father tantras would rely on what are called “three types of isolation.”³¹ That would be followed by the cultivation of union through the stages of the illusory body and luminous clarity. A mother-tantra practitioner would first gain proficiency in the yogas of the channels, winds, and vital essences, and then cultivate union through the stages of innate bliss and emptiness.

Kongtrul enumerates three elements essential to all completion-phase systems: practice that relies on one's own body as method;³² practice that relies on the body of another person as the wisdom aspect;³³ and practice that relies on the great seal of empty form.³⁴ However, Kongtrul states that people of his day are not qualified to rely on a consort (the second practice) and are therefore advised to avoid those practices (and we might assume this still to be the case). Instead, the student of tantra is taught three “ultimate elements”—the relative, the ultimate, and the inseparability of the relative and ultimate—that subsume the elements of the previous three.

THE RELATIVE ELEMENT

The first element, the relative, refers to the yoga of inner fire³⁵ and the illusory body (called “self-consecration”). The inner fire is the very core of the mother-tantra system since the practice of the illusory body and the great seal of luminous clarity, as well as their inseparable union, are all derived from inner-fire yoga. The main practice for the realization of inner fire evokes the pristine awareness that is the indivisibility of luminous clarity and the bliss of the innate joy (the last of four joys).³⁶

The illusory body is considered the most important teaching of all the sutra and mantra ways. As Kongtrul explains, in the course of cyclic existence, one's coarse, karmic bodies are all discarded, one after the other. Nevertheless, a pure-essence body, which is the inseparability of wind and mind, continues without interruption throughout all one's lifetimes, until the attainment of total enlightenment. In tantric literature this is referred to as the “innate body.” This innate body creates the mental body of the intermediate state, the dream body formed of karmic imprints, and the latent subtle body of the formless realm of existence.³⁷ Moreover, it acts as the ground for the actualization of the illusory body. The seed of the innate body is an extremely subtle vital-essence-and-wind union that has always

been present in the central channel and is the support for innate bliss. It is this innate body that manifests as the illusory body.

Kongtrul presents various interpretations of the illusory body, first defining the illusory body in its literal sense: the fact that all phenomena are like illusions. The illusory nature of existence is illustrated in both sutras and tantras by twelve examples: a magician's enchantment, a mirage, a city of *gandharvas*,³⁸ a rainbow, an image in a mirror, the moon reflected on water, an echo, a dream, an optical illusion, a cloud, a flash of lightning, and a water bubble. The practitioner, states Kongtrul, must first gain understanding of this literal meaning through study and reflection. Then, one can begin to meditate on the illusory body in its general sense, as the "impure illusory body," that is, everything that comprises the environment and inhabitants of the three realms. As Kongtrul explains, all phenomena are "composite creations arising from causes and conditions, ... impermanent, [changing] moment by moment. Without any true essence, they are merely the manifestations of dependent origination and therefore like illusions." In particular, one meditates that all bodies—one's own and others'—are like reflections, voices like echoes, and minds like mirages. One's meditation then becomes focused on the "pure illusory body," specific to the vajrayana: the mandala and its resident deities.

The true illusory body—the goal of one's practice—is the illusory body in its hidden sense. To attain the hidden illusory body means that having entered pristine awareness, one manifests the body of a deity—adorned with all the major and minor signs of awakening—from the pure essence of wind and mind. Kongtrul describes this body as "an instantaneously complete form, like an image reflected in a mirror. Its colors are vivid and distinct, like those of a rainbow. It is a single thing that is ubiquitous, like the moon reflected on water." In father-tantra practice, this illusory pristine-awareness body is attained by first cultivating the stage called "focus on mind"³⁹ and then repeatedly entering into and re-emerging from the state of luminous clarity. In mother-tantra practice, it is attained by relying on the inner-fire practice that gives rise to the four special joys.

Familiarization with the illusory body in its hidden sense moves one toward realization of the illusory body in its ultimate sense: the utterly pure illusory body of the deity in the form of the enjoyment dimension of awakening, called the "union beyond training." This union will be described below.

THE ULTIMATE ELEMENT

The second element, the ultimate, refers to the completion phase of luminous clarity. Kongtrul presents this element in terms of the ground, path, and result. He begins his discussion by citing Maitreya's *Jewel Affinity*:⁴⁰ "Mind's nature is luminous clarity. It is changeless like space." These words, he explains, indicate the luminous clarity of the ground, the primordially pure, naturally clear and luminous basis of phenomena: emptiness that has no origin. This ground–luminous clarity manifests naturally during sleep and at death, and it is recognized through practice of the path.

The luminous clarity to be cultivated on the vajrayana path is luminous clarity in its hidden sense. The meditation consists in dissolving the environment and its inhabitants into luminous clarity by means of two contemplations, known as "total apprehension" and "successive destruction,"⁴¹ as well as through the mother-tantra yogas of the channels, winds, and vital essences. Kongtrul describes how the proper cultivation of these methods brings about the gathering of winds and vital essences in the central channel at the area of the heart. As a consequence, there arise five signs indicative of the sequential dissolutions of earth, water, fire, wind, and consciousness, followed by the four manifestations of emptiness, in succession: the light of the empty, which is like moonlight; the increase of light of the further empty, like sunlight; the full culmination of the great empty, like the pervasive darkness of night; and luminous clarity, like a perfectly clear sky at dawn. This is the actualization of luminous clarity in its hidden sense.

As Kongtrul points out, the luminous clarity of the path moves one toward the result: the direct realization of emptiness through the nonconceptual pristine awareness of the true nature of things. This realization is the luminous clarity at the training stage. The luminous clarity at the stage beyond training is realized when all phenomena manifest fully as pristine awareness, and through the merging of ground–luminous clarity and path–luminous clarity, arise as the infinite expanse of reality. This is luminous clarity as the ultimate result.

THE UNION OF THE RELATIVE AND ULTIMATE

The third element, the inseparability of the relative and ultimate elements, refers to union in the completion phase. Kongtrul provides various inter-

pretations of the nature of this union: the union of the relative and ultimate truths (its literal meaning), the union of emptiness and compassion (the mahayana perspective), and the union of innate great bliss and the emptiness of luminous clarity (the vajrayana perspective). He then describes union in its hidden sense: In the mother tantras, union denotes the single taste—like a blend of water and milk—of the object, the uncommon emptiness, and the subject, unchanging great bliss. In the father tantras, union means the inseparability of the relative truth—the self-consecration of the body so that it manifests as the illusory body—and the ultimate truth—mind entering essential reality through luminous clarity. This hidden union still requires training or refinement until one attains the union that is beyond training, known as the body of pristine awareness, which is the ultimate union.

The meditation on union involves first dissolving the environment and its inhabitants sequentially and then, from the state of luminous clarity brought forth by the four manifestations of emptiness, arising as the illusory body. As noted by Kongtrul, this illusory body manifests from the combination of pristine awareness (luminous clarity) and the subtle wind element upon which pristine awareness is mounted. It is a vajra body “not subject to destruction by any means: the very nature of Great Vajradhara.” It is neither the illusory body alone nor luminous clarity alone, but is the simultaneity of the mind abiding in the nature of luminous clarity and the body manifesting as the illusory body.

With this elucidation of the completion phase of union, Jamgön Kongtrul concludes his *General Exposition of the Process of Meditation in the Indestructible Way of Secret Mantra, with an Emphasis on the Tantras*, Book Eight, Part Three, of the *Treasury of Knowledge*.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

With each line of this section we were reminded of Dilgo Khyentsé Rinpoché’s comment on the *Treasury*,⁴² “Ah, the *Sheja Kunkhyab*... if only for every one word, there were two,” as we faced the challenge of working with an extremely condensed piece of writing. In order to comprehend the multitude of references to the meditation formulations and sequences in a text that reduces the vast Tibetan tantric literature to just a few pages, we had to do an enormous amount of research. We then had to decide to what extent we should augment the text with interpolations or endnotes.

No commentary on Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge* has ever been written. In Kongtrul's day, readers of this text had access to oral explanation and commentary and were presumably acquainted with related literature. With the passage of time, however, both the tradition of oral commentary and general familiarity with other texts have declined. We are aware that there once existed a copy of the *Treasury* annotated by the fine scholar Karmey Khenpo. The story of this annotated book, evidently destroyed after the tragic events of 1959, was lamented by Tulku Urgyen Rinpoché in his memoir, *Blazing Splendor*:⁴³

When I think of all the precious treasures that were lost from those days, I can hardly believe my foolishness. The books in the library at Tsurphu were particularly impressive. Knowing what later happened to that priceless library, I regret not having asked to borrow a few books for my trip to Sikkim.

One in particular comes to mind: Karmey Khenpo's annotated version of the *Treasury of Knowledge*. Not only was it in his own large calligraphy, but between the lines he had inserted clarifications that he had personally requested from the author, Kongtrul. The whole text with Kongtrul's own commentary filled three volumes . . .

. . . Still, it often comes to my mind that those notes—Kongtrul's own replies to Karmey Khenpo—would have been such a wonderful embellishment to the *Treasury of Knowledge*!

A further challenge in translating any part of this *Treasury* stems from the large number of source texts the author used to compile material for his work. As mentioned above, Kongtrul consulted a variety of sutras, tantras, and treatises written by both Indian and Tibetan scholars and masters. In some cases, whole passages from the Tibetan commentaries (sometimes in an abbreviated form) are incorporated into the text. However, particularly in the case of Tibetan works, those sources are not always identified. Topics are often presented so concisely that only a hint of what is being said is discernable, and the author's intended meaning becomes clear only with the identification and perusal of his unnamed source. Without examining the source text, even the most skilled translator is bound to commit errors. We have therefore tried to track down every source for this section of the *Treasury*. We have also located most of the direct quotations in their

original versions in the Dergé edition of the Kangyur and Tengyur. This process has allowed us to appreciate the context of each quotation and to correct a number of transcription errors.

Once we discovered that the main source for this particular section is a body of work by Taranatha, we were able to decipher a number of obscure points in the text and to adjust our translation. We relied principally on *The Collected Works of Taranatha* as the basis for our annotation, particularly the works that outline sequences of visualization related to the cited tantras. Our endnotes provide brief descriptions of the various completion-phase practices mentioned by Kongtrul. Without them, the reader would be subjected to a long list of names of instructions with no indication of the nature or purpose of the practice or the rationale behind its particular name. These notes are not intended as a guide for meditation practice, but simply to provide the reader with a general understanding of each practice. The transmission of instructions for practice is the domain of the teacher-student relationship. Such instructions are to be imparted by a true master who belongs to an authentic lineage, and then only when the master deems the student ready to receive them.

To help us interpret the text and gather material for endnotes, in addition to Taranatha's works, we have relied on several tantras contained in the Dergé Kangyur as well as their Indian commentaries found in the Tengyur. The Indian commentaries are particularly helpful for their emphasis on the principles underlying the practices. However, reliance on those texts alone would still leave the nature of the meditation difficult to grasp. As did Taranatha, other Tibetans writers tend to focus on the practical application of the principles of meditation. For this reason, we have depended primarily on material written by Tibetan masters, including another of Kongtrul's *Five Great Treasuries*, the *Kagyü Tantric Treasury*. We have also consulted several works and translations in English and Italian. All these books are listed in the Reference Bibliography.

With a few exceptions, we have rendered Sanskrit and Tibetan technical terms into English. The styles, contexts, and meanings of the source texts cited by Kongtrul vary so widely that a given term cannot always be translated by the same word every time it occurs. Wherever similarity in context and meaning permit it, we have tried to maintain consistency in translation. In the body of the translation, Tibetan and Sanskrit names of persons and deities appear in phonetics. In the endnotes, the Bibliography of Works Cited by the Author, and the Reference Bibliography, Tibetan

words are transliterated according to the Turrell Wylie system and Sanskrit words are equipped with diacritical marks.

The Elements of Tantric Practice, Book Eight, Part Three, represents one complete part of the forty-part *Treasury*. To make the book more accessible, we have divided it into twelve topical chapters and have named the chapters. Chapter One contains Kongtrul's introduction to tantric meditation. The next four chapters, Chapter Two to Chapter Five, pertain to the phase of creation. The last seven chapters, Chapter Six to Chapter Twelve, pertain to the phase of completion. Although we sometimes had to supplement the translation with additional words to maintain reasonable syntax and grammar in English, our aim was to keep interpolated material to a minimum and preserve as much as possible the style of the original.

In preparing this translation, two editions of the text were used: the modern Beijing edition in three-volume book form (Beijing: rDo rje rGyal po and Thub bstan Nyi ma, 1985) and Kyabjé Bokar Rinpoché's personal copy of the Palpung woodblock print (dPal spungs thub bstan chos 'khor gling). Page references in endnotes that cite *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge* (IOK) indicate pages in the Beijing edition.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nearly two decades have passed since work on this text was initiated in Bodhgaya, India, by the Venerable Kyabjé Kalu Rinpoché. It was Rinpoché who decided that the *Treasury of Knowledge* should be translated into English, envisaging that an English translation would lay the foundation for its translation in many other languages. With this in mind, he called together Tibetan scholars from several traditions to collaborate with a group of Western students whom he had asked to undertake the translation. Rinpoché organized the project by assigning particular sections of the *Treasury* to individual translators whose work would be checked by the others once a draft had been prepared. Thus, one of us, assigned by Rinpoché, began work on the first half of *The Elements of Tantric Practice*.

Once the first draft was completed, we turned our attention to the earlier sections of the *Treasury*. Many years later, long after the demise of our computer equipment in the dust and rains of the Himalayan foothills, we discovered a paper copy of the original draft—like meeting an old friend—complete with handwritten notes on clarifications received from many

venerable teachers and scholars who had been in Bodhgaya at the time of the first gathering: Bokar Rinpoché, Nyöshul Khenpo Rinpoché, Khenpo Lodrö Dönyö Rinpoché, and Tara Tulku Rinpoché.

With this as our start, from our base at Kalu Rinpoché's monastery in Sonada, West Bengal, we made several trips to Mirik to study the entire section with Kyabjé Bokar Rinpoché, Kalu Rinpoché's spiritual heir who had taken on responsibility for the translation project. It is difficult to adequately describe the wisdom, kindness, humor, and patience shown by this extraordinary master, who was always willing to share with us his precious time and knowledge. The erudite Khenpo Lodrö Dönyö Rinpoché was also there to assist us. Their elucidation was indispensable in guiding us to a proper understanding of the text. Moreover, both teachers generously gave us access to their personal copies of relevant commentaries, some of which were quite rare and which had belonged to Bokar Rinpoché's predecessor.

There are a number of other persons who contributed to this book. Our sincere thanks to Kristyna Paknys for answering our many queries on Sanskrit terms; to Judith Chasnoff for her skillful editing of the book's introduction; to Peter Roberts for his work on a section of the first draft; and to our editor Susan Kyser of Snow Lion Publications for bringing this work to completion.

The publication of this book has been sponsored by the Tsadra Foundation. We wish to express our gratitude to Eric Colombel, president of Tsadra Foundation, and to Sidney Piburn and Jeff Cox of Snow Lion for their dedication to the publishing of the complete *Treasury of Knowledge*, and for providing all the conditions necessary for the realization of that goal.

May this work, in some small way, repay the kindness of our spiritual guide Kyabjé Kalu Rinpoché, who gave us the opportunity to study this exceptional treatise, and whose commitment to its dissemination has inspired and supported our labors.

THE ROOT TEXT
THE ELEMENTS
OF TANTRIC PRACTICE:

*A General Exposition of the Process of Meditation in the
Indestructible Way of Secret Mantra*

The highest yoga tantra is currently the practice that is most emphasized

Of the four sets of tantra. All aspects of its path are contained in two phases.

The essence of the two phases is expeditious protection of the mind from concepts of characteristics.

The essence of the creation phase is the deity's form possessed of four distinctions;

That of the completion phase is pristine awareness, with its causes and results, which manifests

When winds and mind have entered, abided, and dissolved in the central channel.

The terms mean imagined or fabricated; and the ultimately true or natural state.

Their number is two because they are paths that accord with birth and death;

They involve two aspects to be abandoned: resultant suffering and the seeds;

They eliminate both thoughts of the ordinary and fixation on the sublime deity;

In the context of the path, they are the yoga of body and the yoga of mind;

As for the results, they lead to both the ordinary and supreme results.

The order in the majority of cases is creation followed by completion,
 The support and the supported—like a flower and its fragrance.
 Just as one prepares a field with false millet before sowing rice,
 One purifies thoughts before embarking on what is without thought.
 Once the natural state is realized, deliberate fabrication is dispensed
 with.

The two are cultivated as a union, not solely the appearance or
 emptiness aspect.

The presence of affinities, the special skillful methods, and the very
 nature

Of the three purities are the valid reasons why the two phases lead to
 freedom.

In the creation phase, one must abandon ordinary appearances,
 fixation,

And apprehension of reality; the remedies whose features are antidotal
 Are clear image, pride, and the conviction that what appears is illusory.
 The eight varieties of creation, transformation of bases of purification,
 and so on,

May be condensed into two: transformation of bases; and removal of
 bases.

The individual may be of weak, mediocre, or sharp faculties.

The practitioner advances through the stages of the four yogas:

The beginner's stage, the descent of pristine awareness,

Minimal mastery, and the ultimate level of great mastery.

It is asserted that since this phase purifies both realms and sentient
 beings,

All four modes of birth are purified by a single method. *Great*

Commentary's

System is to purify miraculous birth by creation of the full form all at
 once;

Birth from egg, by creation of the world twice; birth from womb, by
 another.

The visualization-sequence branches in the framework of three
 contemplations—

The initial union, supremely victorious action, and supremely
 victorious mandala—

Belong to the *Indestructible Garland* system and apply to all yoga tantras in general.

The Mahamaya teaches the three yogas of shape, mantra, and reality. Other tantras teach consecration, imagination, and completion of the form;

The four sets of actual awakenings—in an instant, in five parts, in twenty parts,

By means of the net of magical manifestations—encompass all three continuums;

In particular, the set of awakenings in five parts is referred to in many systems,

But here is meant that of the *Net of Magical Manifestation*.

Four branches form the framework of the two Guhyasamaja systems: Familiarization, near attainment, attainment, and great attainment.

Four yogas are taught in the cycle of Yamari: the first, the subsequent,

The superior, and the great yoga. There are many methods such as

The four dwellings: as a sphere, as water, as form, and beyond form.

The *Indestructible Tent* has six branches based on family or nature.

The eight consecutive awakenings were introduced by Jalandhara.

The Kalachakra tantra is presented in a twelve-branch framework.

There is also an elaborate framework related to the purity of the major marks.

A practitioner of the visualization sequences consisting of those branches

Has received initiation and observes pledges. The place is consonant with one's disposition.

In the beginning, one practices at night; once stability is gained, at all times.

One relies on fortitude, qualified assistants, and ritual implements.

The meditation entails both contemplative equipoise and informal contemplation.

The preliminary steps to equipoise are to appease obstructive forces, dispel adverse conditions,

And create favorable ones. For the main practice, one creates a celestial residence.

Next, one meditates on the circle of resident deities in its entirety

Using the creation methods—creation by means of the five actual awakenings,
 Creation in four vajra steps, and creation by means of the three rites.
 The first comprises moon, sun, seed-syllable, merging, and deity manifestation;
 The second, emptiness, seed-syllable, deity manifestation, and syllable placement;
 And the third, seed-syllable, insignia, and full manifestation of the deity's body.
 Completing branches include drawing in the pristine-awareness mandala,
 Conferring initiation, sealing of five types, and offering with praise.
 Four key elements are used as the path: form, imagination, result, and transformative power.
 Having fulfilled all four, one ensures that practice leads to freedom by bringing forth
 Clear images of coarse and subtle aspects in all visualizations and by making one's pride firm.
 The manifestation is that of the deity, while its essence is beyond conceptual elaborations.
 One incapable of that seals the deity with emptiness by means of ascertainment
 And seals it with bliss elicited by subtle and vital-essence yogas or by the wind yogas
 Of the upper and lower nose-tips. When visualization becomes wearisome,
 One should recollect the purity of the deity, of ultimate reality, and of self-knowing awareness.
 One trains for four sessions; at the end of each, one dissolves and re-emerges.
 Informal contemplation comprises the yogas of recitation, sacrificial offerings,
 Eating, passion, conduct, sleep, waking up, and cleansing.

 The bases to be purified are three processes: birth, death, and the intermediate state.
 The death process, with its signs of dissolution of the twenty-five coarse constituents

And the three subtle constituents, is purified by fostering pristine awareness.
 After luminous clarity arise the three stages of light, the eighty conceptions,
 And the intermediate state, which is consciousness riding on the mount of wind.
 This process is purified by different means: the three syllables on the three faculties;
 The *ho* syllables and the *nada* for craving and grasping; an impression only; and so forth.
 That being's birth is influenced by various factors to which the creation methods correspond:
 Urging the molten form with songs and emanation from the space accord with womb birth;
 Creation by moon and sun, insignia, and merging accords with birth from an egg;
 Creation by moon and seed-syllable alone, with birth from heat and moisture;
 And creation of the full form instantaneously, with miraculous birth.
 Creation by the five actual awakenings accords with the stages in the human womb, and so forth;
 The pledge-being, with the coarse body; the pristine-awareness being, with the refined essences of channels, and so on;
 The contemplation-being accords with the subtle innate body; and consecration
 Of the sense fields and the three places, with the experience of sensory objects
 When the potencies of the sense powers and the three faculties have strengthened.
 The drawing in of the pristine-awareness deities symbolizes discernment of details;
 Conferral of initiation and sealing symbolize being in one's own family;
 Offering and praise, the enjoyment of the five types of sensory objects;
 Recitation symbolizes conversation; other steps, the corresponding activities;
 And dissolution and re-emergence symbolize death and taking rebirth.

As to the results of purification, the celestial palace, and so forth,
 correspond
 To the place of awakening; creation by methods, to the manner of
 awakening;
 Offering, praise, recitation, and so forth, to awakened activities and
 deeds.
 Moreover, of the three dimensions, the creation phase possesses the
 entire range
 Of the vast and special attributes of the manifest dimension. Thus,
 looking up,
 The creation phase accords with the likeness of awakening; and
 looking down,
 It accords with the likeness of cyclic life: so declared the seers of the
 sublime.
 The creation-phase contemplations, once a special connection has
 developed,
 Act as ripening agents for the arising of the realization of the
 completion phase.

The completion phase itself comprises the three, ground, path, and
 result,
 Each having the characteristics of innateness, nonconceptuality, and
 totality.
 The ground has two innateness aspects, the nature and the bliss from
 melting.
 By contemplating the ground, it is made manifest at the time of the
 result.
 The root of the path is the union of emptiness and compassion.
 Emptiness means the emptiness endowed with the supreme of all
 aspects.
 Compassion means the uncommon bliss, which does not change.

There are various formulations of the completion-phase branches.
 The *Guhyasamaja Root Tantra* teaches six stages: body isolation,
 Voice isolation, mind isolation, illusory body, luminous clarity, and
 union.
 The first can be included in either the creation phase or vajra
 recitation,

So that all stages are included in the widely known five stages, namely,
Vajra recitation, focus on mind, self-consecration, actual awakening,
and union.

This five-stage formulation is that of the tradition of Arya Nagarjuna.
In the Jnanapada system, vital essences and winds are made workable
By means of the meditations on the four vital essences, whereupon
Mind that has entered profundity, the essential nature of reality,
Unites inseparably with the clarity of the deity's body, the great seal.
The four yogas are shape, mantra, consecration, and pristine awareness.
Another system, the Red Yamari unelaborate completion phase,
consists

Of a preliminary practice whereby elaborations are cut and powers
gained;

A main practice to manifest ineffable pristine awareness; a conclusion
Of six yogas (master, compassion, root, *pranayama*, substance,
And Bhairava), plus a teaching on the way to dispel obstacles.
The Black Enemy tantra teaches the initial yoga of six branches;
The subsequent yoga, practiced by means of focus and examination;
The complete yoga of deliberate behavior with an awareness female;
And the great yoga of entering conduct through luminous clarity
And the awareness-seal. Those father tantras form the main systems.

The king of tantras presents the six branches of vajra yoga: withdrawal,
Meditative absorption, wind yoga, retention, recollection, and
contemplation.

Hevajra's esoteric-instruction system includes the path-and-fruiting
instructions.

Dombipa's expertise was that of the yoga of inner fire.

Saroruha taught the three: self-consecration, entering, and
re-emerging.

Samayavajra expounded the subtle yoga and yoga of the sphere.

Naropa's teachings formed Marpa's twofold system of mixing and
transference.

Mixing comprises the creation-phase trainings in forms, vital essences,
and union;

And completion-phase meditations of inner fire, illusory body, and
luminous clarity.

Transference consists of a main practice and an auxiliary of entering the deceased.

Maitripa's oral teachings are known as the nine sets of the profound path.

These are all contained in the practices of inner fire, seals, and great seal.

Vyadalipa taught the way to make the life force enter the central channel

And, once it has entered, the way to develop the bliss that is unchanging.

The great adept Shantigupta's system comprises four seals: the pledge seal,

Practiced by applying subtle and vital-essence yogas; the real action seal;

The phenomena seal on all appearances; and the great seal of six branches.

As a supplement to those, there is an introduction to the authentic view.

There are many minor teachings such as the *Single Lamp*.

There are three great chariot traditions of Chakrasamvara.

Luipa's tradition has a completion phase to strike crucial points of the cause

And a second one to acquire mastery of the awakened qualities of the result.

The first is twofold, based on the emissary path and based on the yoga path.

For the yoga path, the followers of Pamtingpa use the three designations:

Gathering of vajra-beings, gathering of syllables, and gathering of vital essences,

Corresponding to the instructions on the great yoga (relaxation), instructions

On wind recitation (the coarse), and instructions on vajra recitation (the subtle).

The body of the deity, luminous clarity, and their union constitute the result.

Ghantapa's tradition comprises five stages:

Self-consecration, vajra-cross, filling the jewel,
 Jalandhara, and that of the inconceivable.
 Charyadharapada taught common aspects (training in the creation
 phase
 And in the view's crucial points) and uncommon aspects (the yoga
 path
 And the female-emissary path). The yoga path consists of four stages:
 The tantra stage of the root; inner-fire mantra stage with equal
 emphasis;
 Pristine-awareness stage of vital essence; and secret stage of the result.
 Those aspects are used as the path; twelve branch practices were
 taught.

The Chatuhpitha completion phase includes an uncommon creation
 phase
 In which bliss and emptiness are mutually sealed, and a completion
 phase
 Whose preliminary includes blocking the gateways and vajra
 recitation.
 In its main practice, the pervading aspect consists of two yogas:
 The inconceivable and the action seal; the pervaded aspect comprises
 Four root instructions (like a bull's hoof, like a cow's udder, a bunch
 Of plantain bananas, and a stupa-vase); and branch instructions.
 The Mahamaya comprises the lesser yoga of shape, the profound
 mantra yoga,
 The ultimate yoga of reality, and the auxiliary practice of the triad of
 illusions—
 Those of daytime experiences, dreams, and the intermediate state.
 The Buddhakapala system comprises practice with a focus that entails
 Subtle wind yoga, vital-essence yoga with body as method, and
 enhancement ways;
 And practice without a focus, which involves the branches of
 withdrawal
 And absorption, plus the other four branches, which arise as their
 results.

The *Tara Tantra: Origin of All Rites* teaches four yogas:
 The first yoga is the creation phase and its related aspects;
 The subsequent yoga has both preliminary and main practices;

And the great yoga contains the three indestructibles.
 These are primarily mother-tantra systems. There are many minor ones.
 The tradition that emphasizes the tantras is that of Indian scholars and adepts.

All those systems share the key elements of requiring cultivation of the union

With training as direct cause for attaining the goal of union beyond training;

And requiring that the illusory body be dissolved and made to reappear;

And for that, the key elements of requiring cultivation of both the relative,

Self-consecration, and the ultimate, luminous clarity; and for those, Requiring that the channels, winds, and vital essences be made workable.

All completion-phase systems can therefore be contained in three key elements:

The body of oneself, to strike the crucial point related to the central channel;

The body of another, to elicit and stabilize the pristine awareness of the four joys;

And the great seal of empty form. However, in consideration of people today,

Three key elements—the relative, the ultimate, and their inseparability—are taught.

The relative aspect, the self-consecration completion phase, is twofold.

The common system is to make the channels, winds, and vital essences workable

By means of the three isolations; or the empty enclosures, vase holding, and so on.

The uncommon system is to ignite the inner fires of bliss, warmth, and no thought

So that the four joys and four empties manifest in union. From that arises

The pristine awareness of luminous clarity, and the example innate and the true.

Chandali literally means an agent of fiercely wrathful burning and vanquishing.

The general sense in sutra is the innate; in mantra, bliss, emptiness, and pristine awareness;

The hidden sense means the action, yoga, and innate forms of inner fire;

The ultimate inner fire is luminous clarity, the flame of pristine awareness.

As illustrated by the examples of illusion, everything is the illusory body.

Illusory body in its general sense means the meditation of illusion-like contemplation.

The understanding that appearances lack true existence is gained through examples.

There is a pure illusory body. From that special type dawns realization.

Wind and mind arising as the deity's body after the luminous clarity of the four empties

Is its hidden sense, the very core, illustrated by the rainbow, reflection, and moon on water.

A link is formed through the illusory body of the union with training;

And the ultimate, utterly pure, illusory body of the deity is attained.

The remaining four of the six instructions are branches of those two.

The ultimate, the great-seal completion phase of luminous clarity, is as follows:

The true nature and what manifests during sleep and at death are the ground.

At the time of the path, the view of emptiness, the true nature, is the general sense.

The unceasing clarity of that emptiness's own luminosity is the literal sense.

The innate joy from the winds dissolving in the central channel is the hidden sense;

Accompanied by duality, it is the example luminous clarity; without duality, the true.

Nonconceptual pristine awareness brings about realization and the ultimate result.

In the many meditation methods such as total apprehension and
 successive destruction,
 To elicit correctly the luminous clarity in its hidden sense requires
 giving rise
 To the experience of winds having entered, abided, and dissolved in
 the central channel.
 The eight freedoms are based on steps in the way to enter luminous
 clarity.
 Although the name used is the same, the meanings are unique to this
 way.
 The inseparability of emptiness and compassion is union in its general
 sense.
 Being without the conceptual differentiation as two is union in its
 literal sense.
 The special stage, the one taste of emptiness and great bliss, and the
 inseparability
 Of illusory body and luminous-clarity mind itself, is union in its
 hidden sense.
 The three empties arising and passing in the forward and reverse orders
 Is the union with training; the union beyond training is the opposite
 of that.
 The meditation method is to arise from the luminous-clarity state as
 the illusory body,
 Like the flash of a fish as it springs from water. What arises is the real
 or a similitude.

1. AN INTRODUCTION TO TANTRIC MEDITATION

I. The Preamble

II. The Extensive Exposition

A. A Description of the Two Phases in General

1. The Essence of Each Phase
 2. The Etymology
 3. Specification of Number
 4. Order of Meditation
 5. Reasons Why the Two Phases Lead to Freedom
-

[This text presents *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*, Book Eight,] Part Three, a general exposition of the meditative process in the indestructible way of secret mantra, based mainly on the tantras.¹ A preamble is followed by an extensive exposition.

THE PREAMBLE [I]

The highest yoga tantra is currently the practice that is most emphasized
Of the four sets of tantra. All aspects of its path are contained in
two phases.

In the indestructible way of secret mantra, there are divisions into four sets of tantra, into six sets, and so on. Among these, currently in the Himalayan region, the highest yoga [tantra] is the practice most emphasized of all

levels [of practice]. All aspects of the path of highest yoga are contained in two phases. The *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* states:²

The way taught by vajra-holders
Relies fully on the two phases,
Namely, the phase of creation
And the phase of completion.

THE EXTENSIVE EXPOSITION [II]

This discussion is presented in two sections: a description of the two phases in general; and the subject of meditation in each of the two phases.³

A DESCRIPTION OF THE TWO PHASES IN GENERAL [A]

This section has five parts: the essence of each phase; the etymology [of each term]; specification of number; order; and the reasons why the two phases lead to freedom.

THE ESSENCE OF EACH PHASE [1]

The essence of the two phases is expeditious protection of the
mind from concepts of characteristics.
The essence of the creation phase is the deity's form possessed of
four distinctions;
That of the completion phase is pristine awareness, with its
causes and results, which manifests
When winds and mind have entered, abided, and dissolved in the
central channel.

The essence of the two phases is the expeditious means, through using exceptional techniques, to protect one's mind from the thought [processes] of [apprehending] characteristics.

As to the essence of the phase of creation in particular, [this phase] arises from the deliberate effort of thought,⁴ which serves as its direct cause. Its essential nature is the deity's form of bliss, [inseparable] appearance and emptiness. Its special feature is meditation that accords in aspects with birth, death, and the intermediate state, the three [processes in cyclic exis-

tence]. The great masters of the Sakya tradition⁵ explained [the phase of creation as meditation on] the form of the deity possessed of four distinctions: distinction in method, the relevant method of creation [of the deity's form] as taught in the tantras; distinction in function, whereby the three [aspects], purification, completion, and ripening, are fulfilled;⁶ distinction in result, the capacity to bring about its own result;⁷ and distinction in essential nature, which manifests as the bliss [that arises from] the melting [of vital essence].⁸

The essence of the phase of completion is extraordinary pristine awareness, together with its causes and results, which arises when winds and mind have entered, abided in, and dissolved in the central channel.

THE ETYMOLOGY [2]

The terms mean imagined or fabricated; and the ultimately true or natural state.

As to the meaning of the term “phase of creation” (*bskyed rim*), [the equivalent of “creation” (*bskyed*) is Sanskrit] *utpatti*, which means fabricated. The word *bskyed rim* therefore denotes that which is created by thought or fabricated by thought. [The phase of creation is] also known as the phase of imagination or the yoga involving fabrications.

The equivalent of “completion” (*rdzogs*) is [Sanskrit] *nishpanna*, meaning the ultimately true, or the natural state. [The word] *rdzogs* therefore denotes what is ultimately true, the natural state, or the nature [of things]. What is meant is a state with which one has to familiarize—one that is not created anew but is already fully present.⁹

[The term] “phase” (*krama*) refers to a step in the path.

The phase of creation is also referred to as the phase of imagination and the yoga of fabrications; the phase of completion, as the phase that does not [utilize] imagination and the yoga of the natural state. That being so, the phase of creation is [defined as] the path and branches that involve imagination, the essence of which is fabrication by means of thought; and the phase of completion, the path and branches of the yoga of the innate,¹⁰ in which nothing is fabricated anew by thoughts.

According to some masters of the past, Nagarjuna¹¹ and his spiritual heirs named [these phases] in relation to the [two] bases of purification (birth and death), creation being related to birth; and completion, to

death; and they described the two phases as paths that purify [birth and death]. The authors of the *Commentaries by the Bodhisattvas*¹² named [the phases] in relation to the results, creation being related to ordinary powers; and completion, to the supreme power [of awakening]; and they described the two phases as the means to gain those powers.

Nevertheless, the exalted Taranatha maintained that those [statements] are simply based on general considerations that have no connection to the etymological meanings [of the names of the two phases] and that it is difficult to determine whether these are in fact the views [of Nagarjuna and the authors of the *Commentaries by the Bodhisattvas*].

SPECIFICATION OF NUMBER [3]

**Their number is two because they are paths that accord with
birth and death;
They involve two aspects to be abandoned: resultant suffering
and the seeds;
They eliminate both thoughts of the ordinary and fixation on
the sublime deity;
In the context of the path, they are the yoga of body and the
yoga of mind;
As for the results, they lead to both the ordinary and supreme
results.**

The phases are exactly two in number. They cannot be combined into one phase, nor is there need for there to be three or more phases. This is due to [several reasons]:

The two phases serve as paths to cross over [cyclic existence] using yogas that accord in features with the two processes [in the cyclic life] of a sentient being, the process of birth and the dissolution process at death, the [two] bases to be purified.

Moreover, they involve two abandonments to be made: [one,] the immediate stopping of the manifest arising of ordinary appearance and fixation on it, accompanied by the resultant suffering; and [two,] the immediate abandoning of even the seeds [of that arising, fixation, and suffering].

As for the aspects to be eliminated, [the two phases entail two] processes to abandon them: [one,] that of abandoning thoughts fixated on the ordinary; and [two,] abandoning thoughts fixated on the sublime deity.

Further, since in the context of the ground, the six sense fields are physical manifestations and bliss is a mental manifestation, in the context of the path, there is need for two yogas: the yoga of the creation phase [related to] the body; and the yoga of the completion phase [related to] the mind.¹³ Even with the attainment of the resultant phase of completion,¹⁴ there are the [two] yogas, one [related to the body], the illusory body¹⁵ of just wind and mind, and the other [related to] the mind, luminous clarity.

Finally, as for the results, there are exactly two [kinds]: ordinary powers and the supreme power [of awakening]. The two phases serve as the means to attain those two.

For these reasons, there are exactly two phases. The *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* states:¹⁶

Distinguishing between the common and superior
 Yields two types of familiarization:
 The common, the four vajra rites,
 And the superior, the six branches.¹⁷

ORDER OF MEDITATION [4]

The order in the majority of cases is creation followed by
 completion,
 The support and the supported—like a flower and its
 fragrance.
 Just as one prepares a field with false millet before sowing rice,
 One purifies thoughts before embarking on what is without
 thought.
 Once the natural state is realized, deliberate fabrication is
 dispensed with.
 The two are cultivated as a union, not solely the appearance
 or emptiness aspect.

The order of meditation of the two phases cannot be categorically fixed due to differences in the faculties [of trainees]. In the majority of cases, however, the order of practice for an ordinary individual on the path to freedom of the highest mantra [system] is first to cultivate the phase of creation, and following that, the phase of completion. [Nagarjuna's] *Five Stages* states:¹⁸

For those firmly abiding in the creation phase
 Who aspire to the phase of completion
 The perfect buddhas set forth this method
 In a way that resembles the steps of a ladder.¹⁹

To expand on that, many masters such as Nagarjuna and his spiritual heirs have explained that one should first gain stability in the phase of creation and then cultivate the phase of completion. That viewpoint takes into consideration the necessity for those of weaker faculties who have not previously undergone training to rely first on the former yogas in order to generate the latter ones, comparable to climbing the steps of a ladder.

The great adepts Saroruhā, Durjayachandra,²⁰ and others have explained that one should cultivate the phase of creation in the first half of a formal meditation session and the phase of completion in the latter half. That viewpoint takes into consideration the necessity for those who have gained some facility or are practitioners of moderate faculties to train in the two phases alternately, comparable to taking footsteps.

Some Tibetan masters advise cultivation of the two phases simultaneously, right from the beginning. That viewpoint takes into consideration the suitability of those of sharp faculties who have gained perfect facility to cultivate both phases together, comparable to a bird in flight spreading both wings simultaneously.

In any case, those viewpoints agree with respect to the necessity for a gradual learner to practice first the creation phase and subsequently the completion phase in his or her training on the path to freedom.

Moreover, since the creation phase serves as a support and the completion phase is supported by it, the creation phase is practiced first. [As recorded in the *Hevajra Tantra*,] Vajragarbha²¹ asked the Lord:²² “The meaning of great-bliss innateness²³ is that of the phase of completion itself. What, then, is the use of the phase of creation?” To this question, the Lord replied: “Owing to your confidence in the phase of completion, you are slipping away from the creation phase.” The Buddha then explained that creation is the support, and completion, the supported, like a flower and its fragrance. [*Hevajra Tantra*] *Two Examinations* states:²⁴

Without a body, where would bliss be?
 One could not even speak of bliss.
 Animate beings are pervaded by bliss

Which pervades and is itself pervaded.
 Just as fragrance rests in a flower
 But without the flower cannot be sensed,
 Likewise, without form, and so forth,
 Bliss itself would not be experienced.²⁵

To expand on that, an ordinary person entangled in the net of discursive thinking would be unable at the outset to train in the phase of completion which does not involve thoughts. Therefore, as stated in Vajragarbha's *Commentary* [*Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra*],²⁶ one first purifies the ordinary thought [process] by means of the yoga of creation which involves the conceptual elaborations [of the deity and the mandala]. Then, when one has understood the nature of thought, one embarks on the cultivation of the phase of completion, which is without thought and free from elaborations. This is comparable to first planting false millet in order to prepare the soil of a field and then planting rice once the field has been refined.²⁷

Until one has given rise to an exceptionally stable realization of the natural state, the unfabricated completion phase, one must rely on the fabricated creation phase using imagination since such realization has not yet arisen. Once realization has dawned, however, it is no longer necessary to deliberately cultivate those fabricated yogas, such as ordinary [types of] creation-phase practices involving imagination. This is comparable to a person needing to use a boat²⁸ to cross a river but dispensing with it once he has reached the opposite shore.

At the same time, the supreme [power] is not achieved by the phase of completion in absence of the phase of creation, nor by the phase of creation alone without the phase of completion. In order to attain [the state of] Vajradhara, which is union at the time of the result,²⁹ it is necessary, in the context of the path, to cultivate creation and completion as a union, not solely the appearance aspect or the emptiness aspect.

The phase of creation is the method for cultivating the [appearance-emptiness] union. The phase of completion is the wisdom of the method. That being so, one must meditate on the two as a union. [Atisha's] *Lamp for the Path* states:³⁰

It is taught that method without wisdom
 Or wisdom in absence of method

Will inevitably leave one fettered.
Hence, neither should be neglected.³¹

One might question whether or not this contradicts the statement that once one has given rise to an exceptional phase of completion, the phase of imaginative creation is unnecessary. [To answer that question:] at that point, there indeed would be no need for deliberate cultivation of the phase of creation that is solely imaginative. What is definitely necessary, however, is that the appearance aspect manifest as the creation phase that is the illusory circle of deities.³²

REASONS WHY THE TWO PHASES LEAD TO FREEDOM [5]

**The presence of affinities, the special skillful methods, and the
very nature
Of the three purities are the valid reasons why the two phases
lead to freedom.**

Ancient masters have spoken of three valid reasons why cultivation of the two phases leads to freedom.

The first concerns the presence of affinities, meaning the three continuums [ground, path, and result] sealed by one another.³³ The *All-Secret Tantra* states:³⁴

The cause is sealed by the result;
The result is sealed by the cause.

In the context of the ground, there exists a naturally present affinity, while the mind of the path is an evolving affinity. With the attainment of the result, one becomes lord of a family [of buddhas]. [That means] with [the naturally present affinity as] the substantial cause and [the evolving affinity as] the contributory cause both fully present, the result [i.e., the resultant affinity] is actualized.

The second reason concerns special skillful methods. Skillful methods such as these [two phases] are highly effective as remedies to overcome confusion. The *Hevajra* [*Tantra*] states:³⁵

Thoughts are purified by thoughts themselves.
 Existence is purified by existence itself.
 Just as water that has entered the ear
 Is drawn out [by flushing it] with more water,
 Likewise, the notion of existence
 Is purified by definite knowledge.³⁶

Moreover, [the same tantra] states:³⁷

The horrific karma by which a person is fettered,
 Of whatever kind it may be, that in itself—
 When accompanied by a [skillful] method—
 Will free him from the fetters of existence.³⁸

Accordingly, the cessation of ordinary thoughts is effectively accomplished by thoughts of the deity. This is comparable to the way that thinking someone is one's enemy can be simply stopped on the spot by thinking that the person is one's friend, while applying another technique such as meditating that [the enemy] is empty would be difficult.

A simple reversal of ordinary desire is swiftly effected through meditation on [the union of] bliss and emptiness, while this would not occur in [meditation on] emptiness alone, or other ways. When intentionally generated desire is purified into [a state of] emptiness free from fixation, naturally arising desire will automatically be purified into [a state that is] free from fixation.

The third reason concerns the natures of three purities. (This serves as an extension of the first reason above [the affinities].) In this context, the three purities are the purity of the essential nature, the purity of the particular deities, and the purity of self-knowing awareness.

As for the first, in the context of the ground, the essential nature of all phenomena is emptiness and therefore pure. Hence, it follows that meditation on emptiness in the creation and completion [phases] will lead to freedom, as this amounts to meditation on the nature of reality.

Second, since the bases to be meditated upon—the aggregates, elements, and so forth—are of the same natures as deities, it follows that [creation] meditation will actualize [the result].

Third, as earlier masters have explained, since even the appearance of

the [deity's] body with faces, arms, and so forth, is the mind, it follows that the completion phase will actualize [the result].³⁹

Thus, it stands to reason that meditation with thought and without thought will lead to freedom.

2. THE PHASE OF CREATION

B. Meditation in Each of the Two Phases [II.B]

1. Meditation in the Phase of Creation

- a. The Way to Cultivate the Pristine Awareness of the Creation Phase
- b. The Creation Methods, Practitioners, and Bases of Purification
 - i. Creation Methods
 - ii. Practitioners of the Creation Phase
 - aa. Differences [in Methods] Depending on Faculties
 - bb. The Way to Advance through Four [Stages of] Pristine Awareness
 - iii. The Bases of Purification: The Various Modes of Birth

[This chapter begins] the subject of meditation in each of the two phases (the creation phase and the completion phase). The first, meditation in the phase of creation, is set forth in three parts: the way to cultivate the pristine awareness of the phase of creation; examinations of the [methods of] creation, the practitioners of the creation [methods], and the bases of purification; and the process of entering that pristine awareness. [In this chapter, the first two parts are treated.]

THE WAY TO CULTIVATE THE PRISTINE AWARENESS OF THE CREATION PHASE [a]

In the creation phase, one must abandon ordinary appearances,
fixation,
And apprehension of reality; the remedies whose features are
antidotal
Are clear image, pride, and the conviction that what appears is
illusory.

The initial step in cultivating pristine awareness in the phase of creation is to identify what is to be abandoned. The *Indestructible Tent* [*Tantra*] states:¹

The right meditation has been proclaimed
In order to conquer ordinary thoughts.

Thus, ordinary appearances and fixation on what is ordinary are to be abandoned.

Meditation practice [that entails] the appearance of the deity's form and fixation on the deity immediately stops the manifest arising of [ordinary] appearances and fixation (which are to be abandoned). Moreover, by understanding the deity to be without inherent nature, apprehension of both ordinary appearances and the deity's appearance as inherently real is also stopped. These [results] are due to [the practitioner] having earnestly applied remedies whose features specifically counteract each of the three—[ordinary] appearances, fixation, and apprehension of a [false] reality—individually.

This approach is in contrast to that of the way of the perfections.² In the perfections practice, one subdues emotional afflictions, which are the cause [of suffering], thereby simply stopping the arising of future suffering, the result. In this [creation phase], right from the start one transforms the truth of suffering, these impure appearances themselves, into a pure mandala, thereby immediately stopping the manifestation of suffering.

That being so, in the phase of creation, generating a clear image of the deity's form is antidotal to ordinary form. Cultivating the pride of being a *heruka*³ or another [deity] is antidotal to [conceptions] such as ordinary human pride. Viewing what arises as being like an illusion is antidotal to

apprehending experiences as inherently real. In the context of those [methods], once a clear image has arisen, immediately those [ordinary conceptions] will be stopped, and the clear image will easily arise again, like a clear image of a woman seen in the mind of someone who desires her. [Dharma-kīrti's] *Treatise on Valid Cognition* states:⁴

Therefore, whether it be the true or untrue,
If one becomes very familiarized with that
And brings the process to its culmination,
One will reap a clear, thought-free mind.⁵

Thus, once proficiency has been achieved, there will arise clarity of image in both what is true and what is untrue.

THE CREATION METHODS, PRACTITIONERS, AND BASES OF PURIFICATION [b]

This section has three parts: an examination of the different kinds of creation [methods]; an examination of the practitioners of the creation phase; and an examination of the bases of purification, the [various] modes of birth.

CREATION METHODS [i]

**The eight varieties of creation, transformation of bases of
purification, and so on,
May be condensed into two: transformation of bases; and
removal of bases.**

The varieties of creation methods have been presented in many formats, detailed and condensed. These methods may be classified as eight types or all contained in two [broad categories]. In the eightfold classification, the methods are as follows: creation based on transformation of the bases of purification; creation by means of strong intent; creation [like] the flash of a fish [as it springs] from water; creation based on the seed-syllable and name only; creation based on the essential mantra only; creation in three steps only; creation in three steps plus a seat; and creation based on the sun and moon together.

The first method is creation based on transformation of the bases of purification. An example would be the visualization of [white and red] spheres [of light] within the channels [of one's body] and the heroes and heroines who arise from the transformation of those spheres.⁶

The second method is creation by means of strong intent. This is to imagine that [the deity] has fully manifested in an instant simply by bringing her to mind. It is a meditation that is spontaneous, dependent solely on will. This method is also called instantaneous creation.

The third method is creation [like] the flash of a fish [as it springs] from water. This is to imagine that [the deity suddenly] appears above a seat or within a celestial palace, like the springing of a fish from water or the swelling up of a bubble.

The fourth method is creation based on a seed-syllable or name only. An example would be [the visualization of the deity] as one says, "from *i* [arises] Amoghasiddhi"; or, "from *tam* [arises] Tara."

The fifth method is creation based on the essential mantra only.⁷ An example would be to imagine that by saying "*om amoghasiddhi svaha*," the body of Amoghasiddhi arises.

The sixth method is creation in three steps [only]. An example would be visualization [of the deity] as one says, "[The seed-syllable *i* appears.] From *i* [arises] a sword. From the sword [arises] Amoghasiddhi."

The seventh method is creation in three steps plus a seat. This is to visualize [the deity] by following the [previous] three steps, with the addition of a lotus and moon [seat] or a lotus and sun [seat].

The eighth method is creation based on the sun and moon together. This is to visualize [the deity] arising from a seed-syllable that stands between sun and moon [disks] joined together, or from a seed-syllable atop sun and moon [disks].

Those eight methods of creation of the deity may be condensed into two methods of creation known as "transformation of the bases" and "removal of the bases." The first corresponds exactly to the first of the eight methods. [The second,] removal of the bases, refers to creation after the bases of purification have been cleared away through [meditation on] emptiness. This corresponds to the remaining seven ways [of creating the deity].

The [eight] methods may also be condensed into four types: creation of the full form all at once; creation based on only a seed-syllable; creation in three steps; and creation through the five [steps of] actual awakening.⁸

In this format, the first corresponds to the second and third [of the above eight methods]; the second, to the fourth and fifth; the third, to the sixth and seventh; and the fourth, to the eighth.

PRACTITIONERS OF THE CREATION PHASE [ii]

This examination has two parts: differences [in the methods of creation] depending on the levels of faculties of practitioners; and the way practitioners advance through four [stages of] pristine awareness.

DIFFERENCES [IN METHODS] DEPENDING ON FACULTIES [aa]

The individual may be of weak, mediocre, or sharp faculties.

To the question of whether or not there are [specific] levels of yogins' faculties [suited] to the stages of those various methods of creating the deity, one must answer in the affirmative. This is substantiated by the following citation from the *Samvarodaya Tantra*:⁹

For meditation on the creation-phase mandala,
The weak and mediocre should imagine the mandala,
While one of sharp faculties should meditate
On the mandala that is mind itself, in an instant;
By means of the yoga performed in an instant
One should meditate on the phase of completion.

The first [two] lines mean that the first two types of creation-phase practitioner—those of weak or mediocre faculties—create [the deity] gradually. [The second two lines] mean that the third type—of sharp faculties—does the method of creation of the full form all at once, which takes [only] an instant. The last two lines mean that even the full manifestation of the body of pristine awareness in the phase of completion is accomplished in an instant, as in the previous case (the sharp). An alternative interpretation would be, as stated in [Abhayakaragupta's] *Garland of the Complete Yogas*,¹⁰ that creation performed instantaneously, called “the profound phase of creation” or “the superficial phase of completion,” is the method of deity yoga intended for a person of sharp faculties.

THE WAY TO ADVANCE THROUGH FOUR [STAGES OF] PRISTINE AWARENESS [bb]

**The practitioner advances through the stages of the four yogas:
The beginner's stage, the descent of pristine awareness,
Minimal mastery, and the ultimate level of great mastery.**

Whatever one's type of faculties, after having cultivated the pristine awareness of the phase of creation according to [the methods] spoken of above, one will advance through the realizations [arising] from four yogas: the beginner's stage; the descent of pristine awareness; a minimal degree of mastery of pristine awareness; and great mastery of pristine awareness.

The first stage, that of the beginner, starts with the meditation sequence of the four branches of familiarization and attainment¹¹ and includes everything up to the point of [being able] to visualize clearly the coarse deities in gradual steps but not visualize them clearly all at once.

The second stage, that of the descent of pristine awareness, is the point at which [one is able] to visualize clearly the mandala of coarse [deities] all at once but not visualize clearly the [subtle] deities of the sense fields [of the coarse deities], and so forth, all at once.

The third stage, known as that of a minimal degree of mastery or [simply] mastery of pristine awareness, is the point at which there is a clear visualization of all the deities of the sense fields [of the coarse deities] all at once. Everything up to that point will be accomplished by the phase of creation alone. Beyond that point, there will not arise [any realization if the meditation is] not conjoined with the phase of completion. However, meditation on the creation and completion [phases] together will enable one to emanate and reabsorb the mandala within subtle spheres, and the contrast between periods of formal meditation and post-meditation will disappear. If one [continues to] make an effort [in this], one will [be able to] remain in the contemplation of creation and completion with no distinction between day and night. This stage includes everything just prior to the point of unhindered performance of all the various types of activation rites based on meditative absorption.

The fourth stage, known as that of great or perfect mastery of pristine awareness, is the point at which there arise in a single instant the infinite, all-encompassing, clear images of contemplation, as well as the power to effect a multiplicity of benefits for sentient beings merely by intending to

do so. [At this point,] the practitioner must have achieved not only total ultimate realization of the creation phase itself but also total realization of the completion phase from the warmth [stage]¹² on.

THE BASES OF PURIFICATION:

THE VARIOUS MODES OF BIRTH [iii]

It is asserted that since this phase purifies both realms and sentient beings,

All four modes of birth are purified by a single method. *Great Commentary's*

System is to purify miraculous birth by creation of the full form all at once;

Birth from egg, by creation of the world twice; birth from womb, by another.

Expositions on this [subject] all agree that the term “phase of creation” refers to the purification of birth, death, and the intermediate state in general, and the purification of the process of birth in particular.

Birth occurs in one of four ways, known as birth from a womb, birth from an egg, miraculous birth, and birth from heat and moisture. Concerning [purification of] those four kinds of birth, there are two points of view: one, that each kind of birth requires its own specific method of purification; and the other, that the purification of one kind [automatically] purifies all the others. According to Lord [Karma] Trinlé,¹³ one should assume that all forms of the creation phase incorporate two purification steps, that of environments and that of the inhabitants. Thus, the statement that “all four modes of birth will be purified by a single [method]” is true in that if one trains in these two steps of the creation phase—the purification of realms and the purification of sentient beings—one will eliminate what all [four kinds of birth] entail. In other words, this phase of creation acts as the yoga that effects purification of the impure environments and inhabitants in the same way that the training in purifying realms¹⁴ in the way of the perfections does. That being the case, [the phase of creation] eliminates what all [kinds of birth] entail.

According to the system found in [Pundarika's] *Great Commentary on the Kalachakra Tantra*, miraculous birth is purified by the method of creation of the full form all at once [in which the deity is visualized] in

an instant. Birth from an egg is purified by twice creating the universe.¹⁵ Birth from a womb is purified by yet another method, that of creation of the main and attendant deities by means of the two supremely victorious [contemplations].¹⁶

[Pundarika's] *Great Commentary*, [in discussing The Means of] Attainment, the fifty-first chapter [of the *Kalachakra Concise Tantra*,] states:¹⁷

Hence, there are two ways of coming into life: one is birth from a womb, and the other, birth from an egg. Birth from an egg [corresponds to] the creation of the world because the word “egg” refers to the “egg of Brahma”¹⁸ [from which the world is said to have arisen]. Birth from a womb is the way every human comes into being. Instantaneous birth is the way sentient beings born in the miraculous mode enter life. That is a single-step process of coming into an existence since it occurs in a fraction of an instant simply due to the sentient being's intention. This was spoken by the Buddha.

Although there are a great number of presentations based on tantras and commentaries by scholars and adepts, the above points should be regarded as the essence [of the subject].¹⁹

3. ENTERING PRISTINE AWARENESS

- c. The Process of Entering Pristine Awareness [II.B.1.c]
 - i. The Branches of Visualization Sequences
 - aa. Three-Branch Frameworks of Visualization
 - 1' Three Contemplations
 - 2' Shape, Mantra, and Reality
 - 3' Three Yogas
 - bb. Four-Branch Frameworks
 - 1' The System of the *Net of Magical Manifestation*
 - 2' The System of Guhyasamaja
 - 3' The System of the Yamari Tantras
 - 4' The System of the Rali Tantras
 - cc. The Six-Branch Framework
 - dd. The Eight-Branch Framework
 - ee. The Twelve-Branch Framework
 - ff. An Alternative Framework

[This chapter, a continuation of the subject of creation-phase meditation, begins the presentation of] part three, the steps in the process of entering the pristine awareness of the phase of creation, for which there are two topics: the [different] branches of the visualization sequences; and the visualization sequences that incorporate those branches. The first topic, the branches of visualization sequences, is set forth in six parts: frameworks of three branches; frameworks of four branches; the framework of six branches; the framework of eight branches; the framework of twelve branches; and an alternative framework.

THREE-BRANCH FRAMEWORKS OF VISUALIZATION [aa]

This section has three parts: the three contemplations; the three [branches of] shape, mantra, and reality; and the three yogas.

THREE CONTEMPLATIONS [1']

The visualization-sequence branches in the framework of three contemplations—

The initial union, supremely victorious action, and supremely victorious mandala—

Belong to the *Indestructible Garland* system and apply to all yoga tantras in general.

There are many different branches that form the visualization sequences¹ of the creation phase owing to the [various] approaches of the individual tantras and great masters. The *Indestructible Garland*, an explanatory tantra of the great yoga or general explanatory tantra, presents a framework for the various branches of the creation phase that consists of three contemplations. That [tantra] states:²

The initial union comprises yoga,
Subsequent yoga, superior yoga,
And great yoga; great yoga consists
Of the supremely victorious mandala
And the supremely victorious action.

The three contemplations are the contemplation of initial union, the contemplation of the supremely victorious action, and the contemplation of the supremely victorious mandala. Altogether, there are six yogas when the yogas of the two supremely victorious [contemplations] are added to the four yogas³ [listed in the above citation]. However, since the first four yogas are all included in the initial union, the expression “three contemplations,” or “three yogas,” is used.

These three form a broad framework [applicable] to the main body of the sadhana. Thus, they are found in both yoga tantra and great yoga tantra, as well as in both the father and mother tantras of great yoga.

All expositions evidently agree with the general statement that “the ini-

tial union amounts to a meditation procedure that fulfills primarily one's own aims, and the two supremely victorious contemplations are meditation procedures that fulfill primarily others' aims." Here, the intended meaning is simply that the complete awakening of oneself precedes the stage of application to others' benefit.

There are many ways in which the three contemplations are demarcated; these will not be set forth at this point. However, the essential meanings of the three are explained as follows:

[The first,] for which the body is the point of reference, consists of the contemplation of [oneself as] the main deities, male and female, who act as emanators of the [other] deities of the mandala. Since this contemplation is done prior to the remaining two, it is [called] initial. Since it inseparably unites method and wisdom, it is [called] union. To mention its principal points, initial union includes all [steps of the visualization] from the creation of the [mandala] residence up to the creation of the [main] male and female figures.

[The second,] the supremely victorious mandala, consists of [the visualization of] the entirety of the deities of the mandala who have emanated from the bodhichitta of those two [male and female main figures] and the arrangement [of the deities] in their respective places. Because [one visualizes] the entire mandala with its arrangement of mandala deities, [this contemplation is called] the supremely victorious mandala.⁴

[The third,] done subsequent to that, consists of deeds such as the purification of realms by all deities. Because these deeds are similar to the deeds of the Buddha, [this contemplation is referred to as] the supremely victorious action.

As explained above, this represents the system of the *Indestructible Garland*, a broad framework that encompasses both inner and outer yogas.⁵

SHAPE, MANTRA, AND REALITY [2']

The Mahamaya teaches the three yogas of shape, mantra, and reality.

The *Mahamaya*⁶ and other tantras set forth the threefold [formulation consisting of] shape, mantra, and reality [yogas]. These three apply to both path and result; and within the path itself, to both the creation phase and the completion phase.

In the context of the creation phase, all the steps from the manifestation of the forms of the main deities up to the [contemplation of the] supremely victorious mandala constitute the yoga of shape. The supremely victorious action corresponds to the yoga of mantra. [The yoga of] the subtle sphere, and so forth,⁷ constitute the yoga of reality. According to a different explanation, creation corresponds to the yoga of shape; recitation, to the yoga of mantra; and entering luminous clarity and emerging from it, to the yoga of reality.⁸

THREE YOGAS [3']

Other tantras teach consecration, imagination, and completion of the form;

A number of other [tantras] teach three different yogas. In his *Illuminating Lamp*,⁹ Chandrakirti cites the splendid *Net of Magical Manifestation: King of Tantras*:¹⁰

Three kinds of yoga should be known:
That of consecration, imagination,
And the completion of the form itself.
These yogas are praised by all buddhas.

Generating pride through mantras' blessings
Is said to be the consecration yoga.
The purified mind of awakening
Is a great source of secret-mantra seeds.

The complete form manifested in steps,
Imagined as a set of symbols,
Is taught as the ritual yoga
Referred to as imagination.

Instantaneous manifestation of pristine awareness
Endowed with the supreme of all aspects,
The performer of emanation and withdrawal,
Is said to be the yoga of completion.

As stated, there are three yogas: the yoga of imagination, the yoga of consecration, and the yoga of completion.

The first, the yoga of imagination, refers to creating, from within the state of emptiness and through the steps [of visualizing] the seed-syllable, insignia, and so forth, the complete form of the deity with faces and arms. This is the actual deity yoga of the phase of creation. Moreover, it includes all the steps in what is known as “the phase of completion with signs,” which entails visualization of syllables, spheres [of light], the emanating and withdrawing of light,¹¹ and so forth, and which, in terms of being [a method] to elicit bliss, is [considered to be] deity yoga.

The second, the yoga of consecration, refers to the consecration, by means of bliss and emptiness (the mantra), from which is instantly created the deity with faces and arms [at the stage of] body isolation; the inseparability of wind and mantra [at the stage of voice isolation]; and the bliss, and so forth, manifested in just an instant, without using imaginative techniques, [at the stage of] mind isolation, devoid of faces and arms.

The third, the yoga of completion, refers to the illusory body with faces and arms [at the stage of] union; and the great bliss [at the stage of] luminous clarity, devoid of faces and arms.¹² The five stages [of the completion phase] are included in this [yoga]. The way [this last yoga] itself applies to the phase of creation alone is easily understood.¹³

FOUR-BRANCH FRAMEWORKS [bb]

This discussion has four parts: the system of the *Net of Magical Manifestation* [of *Manjushri*]; the system of Guhyasamaja; the system of the Yamari cycle of tantras; and the system of the Rali tantras.

THE SYSTEM OF THE *NET OF MAGICAL MANIFESTATION* [1']

The four sets of actual awakenings—in an instant, in five parts,
in twenty parts,

By means of the net of magical manifestations—encompass all
three continuums;

In particular, the set of awakenings in five parts is referred to in
many systems,

But here is meant that of the *Net of Magical Manifestation*.

The *Net of Magical Manifestation of Manjushri*¹⁴ presents four sets of actual awakenings: the actual awakening in an instant; the actual awakenings in five parts; the actual awakenings in twenty parts; and the actual awakenings by means of the net of magical manifestation.

These four sets of actual awakenings constitute a major framework that encompasses all three continuums¹⁵ and form twelve [branches] when each of the four is divided into the three contexts—ground, path, and result.¹⁶ In the context of the path, each set pertains to both the creation [phase] and the completion [phase]. Here, in the context of the phase of creation, the four are considered from two perspectives: that of one continuous sequence of visualization; and that of the distinct steps of the methods.

As for the first, one continuous sequence of visualization, the actual awakening in an instant corresponds to [meditation on] emptiness; the actual awakenings in five parts correspond to the completion of the form [of the deity]; the actual awakenings in twenty parts, [the steps] from urging with songs the molten [form of the deity]¹⁷ up to [merging] with the pristine-awareness deities as a single flavor; and the actual awakenings by means of the net of magical manifestation, the yoga of the subtle sphere.¹⁸ The correspondences of the first, second, and last are easily understood. The third, the set of actual awakenings in twenty parts, corresponds to [urging with songs, etc.] in that [the twenty parts] are related to the number of the ten winds, the life wind, and so forth, and the winds of the ten mandalas, which emerge after the child is born.¹⁹

As for the second, the distinct steps of the methods, there are many comprehensive presentations of the visualization procedures for each of the four sets. That being said, an example of the first, the actual awakening in an instant, would be the method of creation of the full forms of all the deities all at once or creation by means of the yoga of completion formulated by the master Abhayakara²⁰ for the sake of practitioners of sharpest faculties. An example of the actual awakenings in five parts would be the sadhana of the circle of yoginis taught in the eighth chapter of the first examination of the *Hevajra Tantra* [*Two Examinations*].²¹ An example of the actual awakenings in twenty parts would be the sadhana of the Blessed One [i.e., the main deity] through the step called urging with songs the molten [form of the deity] taught in the fifth chapter of the second examination of the *Hevajra Tantra* [*Two Examinations*].²² (Here, the meaning of “twenty” is as explained in a previous [section] according to

the *Commentaries by the Bodhisattvas*.²³ According to other commentaries, [twenty] refers to ten causal factors for creation and ten resultant factors.)²⁴ An example of the actual awakenings by way of the net of magical manifestation would be the capacity, owing to the force of the yogin's perfect knowledge, to emanate and transform mandalas perceptible by those to be guided.

Of those four sets of awakenings, one should understand in detail the set of awakenings in five parts since the use of this expression is often found in yoga tantras and the highest tantras. The set [of five] should be regarded as follows:

The root [tantra] and commentaries of *Secret Manjushri*²⁵ explain that the five actual awakenings are of the natures of the five pristine awarenesses, the mirror-like and the others,²⁶ and teach meditation [cultivated] by means of intentional imagination. [That entails] step-by-step visualizations that are in accordance with the focuses of contemplation specific to these awakenings.²⁷

The *Summation of Essential Principles*, [the root scripture of] yoga tantra, correlates the five awakenings with five mantras. It teaches an intentional application of the five pristine awarenesses by means of the five awakenings, which [in this system] are called “discerning knowledge of mind,” “resolve of the mind of awakening,” “vajra of stability,” “essential nature of the vajra,” and “equality with all transcendent ones.”²⁸ A similar explanation is found in the *Indestructible Peak* [*Tantra*].²⁹ The *Vajradaka* and *Samputa* tantras³⁰ present a slightly different way of meditating on those same five mantras.

Followers of the Arya [Nagarjuna] tradition of Guhyasamaja,³¹ in [the context of] creation of the original lord,³² refer to the five awakenings by the names “awakening by means of essential reality,” “awakening by means of the moon [disk],” “awakening by means of the seed-syllable,” “awakening by means of the insignia,” and “awakening by means of the manifestation of the complete form [of the deity].”³³

The Luipa³⁴ system of Chakrasamvara presents the five as follows:

[One imagines] the vowels and consonants [of the Sanskrit alphabet] appearing on a reddish-white moon. The vowels and the white hue represent the mirror-like [pristine awareness]; the consonants and red hue, [the pristine awareness of] sameness; seed-syllable *hum* [in their midst] (the causal vajra-holder),³⁵

the discerning [pristine awareness]; the emanating and withdrawing [of rays of light from the *hum*], all-accomplishing [pristine awareness]; and the instantaneous manifestation of the residence and resident [deities], the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena.

The *Hevajra Tantra* states:³⁶

The moon is said to be mirror pristine awareness,
 The sun,³⁷ the pristine awareness of sameness,
 One's deity's insignia with the seed-syllable
 Is the pristine awareness of discernment,
 All becoming one, the active pristine awareness,
 Full manifestation, the pure ultimate dimension:
 These steps which were taught by the wise
 Constitute the meditation of five parts.³⁸

Thus, [the *Hevajra Tantra*] presentation [of five awakenings] differs from those of the approaches mentioned above.

In the Kalachakra system, the moon with the vowels represents [awakening by means of] mirror[-like] pristine awareness. The sun with the consonants is [awakening by means of] the pristine awareness of sameness. The syllable *hum*, [which symbolizes] the scent-eater,³⁹ is [awakening by means of] discerning pristine awareness. The merging of all these into one, endowed with the syllable *hi*, [which symbolizes] the life wind, is [awakening by means of] accomplishing pristine awareness. That merging into one gives rise to the full manifestation of the [deity's] form, which, endowed with the syllable *ham*⁴⁰ [symbolizing] consciousness, represents [awakening by means of] the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena.⁴¹ Thus, the deity is complete as the essence of Akshobhya.

It is due to distinctions in the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena that, inwardly, there are five pristine awarenesses. For this reason, outwardly, in the mandala, Akshobhya [i.e., the Kalachakra arising from the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena] radiates five lights.

The [above] synopsis accords with the viewpoints of the majority [of scholars] in this tradition [of Kalachakra]. While that is so, the five actual

awakenings as treated here accord for the most part with the Hevajra [tantra]. According to that tantra, concisely put, there are five bases of purification: semen, ovum, scent-[eater, i.e., intermediate being], life wind, and consciousness. [Vajragarbha's] *Commentary* [*Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra*] states:⁴²

The body that is fully formed by the five—
Semen, ovum, mantra [syllables],
Life force, and consciousness—
Is called the full manifestation of form.

Thus, there are five means of purification: the moon, sun, [and the syllables] *hum*, *hi*, and *ham*. The results of purification are also five in number: the five pristine awarenesses (or five victorious ones).⁴³ These [bases, means, and results of purification] form three groups: [one,] semen, moon, indestructible body, Vairochana; [two,] ovum, sun, indestructible speech, Ratnasambhava; and [three,] scent[-eater], syllable *hum*, indestructible mind, Akshobhya. These groups, set forth in this way, stem from the system of the *Net of Magical Manifestation*.

THE SYSTEM OF GUHYASAMAJA [2']

Four branches form the framework of the two Guhyasamaja systems:
Familiarization, near attainment, attainment, and great attainment.

The *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* states:⁴⁴

In all of the yoga tantras⁴⁵
Ever praised by the yogin:
First is the rite of familiarization,
Second, that of near attainment,
Third, the method of attainment,
And fourth, that of great attainment.

It is taught that all the aspects of yoga are included in this four-branch [sequence].⁴⁶ As well, the same source states:⁴⁷

Distinguishing between the common and superior
 Yields two types of familiarization:⁴⁸
 The common, the four vajra rites;
 And the superior, the six branches.⁴⁹

Thus, the common type is considered to be the four[-branch sequence of] familiarization and attainment of the phase of creation; and the superior type, the four[-branch sequence of] familiarization and attainment [formulated] in six branches. These [four branches] are the main principles to be understood by yogins. Hence, [the above citation] says “ever praised by the yogin.”

In the context of the Guhyasamaja system, the methods of practice for the common type of four-branch [sequence] are presented differently in the two [commentarial] traditions of Guhyasamaja, [that of Arya Nagarjuna and that of Jnanapada].

The Arya tradition [of Guhyasamaja]⁵⁰ sets forth the four branches as follows:⁵¹ The familiarization branch comprises [the steps] up to and including the first [of the five] actual awakenings, [awakening by means of essential reality].⁵² It is [known as] “familiarization” because supreme awakening is aimed at emptiness, and this branch effects the familiarization of pristine awareness, the subject, with emptiness, the object.⁵³

The branch of near attainment comprises [the steps] from the previous step up to and including the full manifestation of the body mandala.⁵⁴ It is “near attainment” because [this branch brings about] attainment of the enjoyment dimension of mantras, which is near [in terms of resemblance] to the enjoyment dimension of pristine awareness,⁵⁵ and because [this branch brings about] the attainment of the sense fields of the deities.⁵⁶

The branch of attainment comprises [the steps] from the previous step up to and including [the moment of] passion.⁵⁷ It is “attainment” because [in this branch] one attains [the realization of] the sameness of one’s body, speech, and mind and the lords of mantras, [the three syllables that symbolize] the indestructible bodies, voices, and minds of the buddhas.⁵⁸

The branch of great attainment comprises [the steps] from making offerings⁵⁹ up to and including complete dissolution [of the mandala and the circle of deities].⁶⁰ It is “great attainment” because it brings about the attainment [of the power] to benefit others in great measure and completes the three beings (pledge-being, contemplation-being, and pristine-awareness being), which are [known as] one’s own mantras,⁶¹ and the crowning by the lord of the family.⁶²

The way a beginner's powers are gained through applying the four branches is as follows: The familiarization branch comprises all four branches of familiarization and attainment as just described. The branch of near attainment consists in [the practice known as] "exhorting the mind" as taught in the tenth chapter [of the *Guhyasamaja*]⁶³ which is done after having implemented [various forms of] tantric conduct. The attainment branch consists of the [forms of tantric] conduct of the creation phase and the fierce rite.⁶⁴ The branch of great attainment consists of the activation rites of appeasement, and so forth, and the implementation of powers.⁶⁵

The Jnanapada tradition⁶⁶ presents [each of] the four branches in three procedures—minor, intermediate, and major—to yield a total of twelve [steps].

The minor four-branch procedure⁶⁷ is as follows: The main body of the familiarization branch consists in generation as the causal vajra-holder; the creation of the mandala in the womb [of the main female deity] and the conferral of the initiation of compassion on sentient beings; [the two deities] melting due to the intermediate being entering [the womb mandala], and then [the deities] being urged by the songs of the four goddesses and [subsequently] arising as the resultant vajra-holders;⁶⁸ and recitation of the mantra [*om dharmadhatu svabhavatmako ham*] with the pride of being perfect awakening.⁶⁹

Near attainment consists in the consecration of the sense fields.⁷⁰

Attainment consists in the consecration of one's body, speech, and mind by the three lords of all, [the mantras],⁷¹ the indestructible bodies, voices, and minds [of the buddhas]; and the drawing in of the pristine-awareness deities.

Great attainment consists in the vajra being who resembles oneself (the three-beings placement) and the initiation (the sealing with the lord of the family [as a crown ornament]).⁷²

In the intermediate four-branch procedure, the four branches are carried out in their entirety in the manner just outlined, this time for the [central] female [deity] figure.⁷³

The major four-branch procedure consists of the supremely victorious mandala⁷⁴ in which the four branches are fulfilled in their entirety, this time for the retinue, in the creation of the mandala within the womb of the [central] female deity and the emanation of the retinue.⁷⁵

Thus, [in the Jnanapada system,] creation of the pledge deity constitutes familiarization; consecration of the sense fields, near attainment; the

consecration of the awakened bodies, voices, and minds, attainment; and initiation plus sealing [with the lord of the family], great attainment.⁷⁶

There are various other ways of presenting the four-[branch sequence of] familiarization and attainment in the context of the phase of creation. However, in the system of Kalachakra, the four branches must be understood both in relation to the bases of purification and in relation to the purificatory means.

As to the first, the bases of purification, the initial formation of the child's body [in the womb] is said to be [the basis of purification by means of] familiarization; the development of speech following birth, [by means of] near attainment; the loss of the baby teeth and growth of the adult teeth, [by means of] attainment; and the experience of orgasm at the age of sixteen years, [by means of] great attainment.⁷⁷

As to the second, the purificatory means, the main body of the familiarization branch consists in, first, meditation on the four gateways to freedom;⁷⁸ then, the dissolution of the seed-syllable of vowels and consonants; and finally, the full manifestation of the body [of the deity] by means of the five actual awakenings.⁷⁹

Near attainment [begins with the step called] urging with songs the molten form. This corresponds to the stage in the womb (in the case of a being who is to be born from a womb) in which the five types of winds, those of earth, water, fire, wind, and space, compel the being—whose consciousness is like that of the dream state—to take birth in the outer world—which is like the waking state.⁸⁰ [After that are the steps called] the supremely victorious action and the drawing in of the pristine-awareness deities. These correspond to what follows birth, the activation of the child's sense faculties and the concurrent development of speech and its functioning due to the flow of the life wind.⁸¹

Attainment consists in the [step called] yoga of vital essence.

Great attainment consists in the [step called] subtle yoga.⁸²

THE SYSTEM OF THE YAMARI TANTRAS [3']

Four yogas are taught in the cycle of Yamari: the first, the
subsequent,
The superior, and the great yoga. ...

The *Red Yamari* and *Black Yamari* tantras state:⁸³

Meditate on yoga as the first step,
 Subsequent yoga as the second,
 Superior yoga as the third step,
 And great yoga as the fourth.

To expand on that:⁸⁴

The manifestation of Vajrasattva
 Should be declared to be the yoga.

The particular deity of a concordant cause
 Is referred to as the subsequent yoga.⁸⁵

The manifestation of the entire retinue
 Is the meditation of the superior yoga.

The consecration of the deity's eyes, and so forth,
 And that of the awakened bodies, voices, and minds,
 Drawing in the pristine-awareness mandala,
 Tasting the nectar, and worship by means
 Of vast offerings and words of praise:
 These are considered to be the great yoga.

In that way, these four yogas are expounded in the Yamari cycle of tantras. The *Buddhasamayoga*⁸⁶ sets forth [four yogas whose] names and meanings for the most part correspond to these. Moreover, *Secret Moon Essence*⁸⁷ describes four yogas—yoga, subsequent yoga, close yoga, and superior yoga—all of which are definitely related in one way or another to the four branches of familiarization and attainment.

According to the famous *Indestructible Garland* system, yoga is generally [defined as] the inseparable union of method and wisdom as is taught in the *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra*. In this context, however, yoga entails contemplation of the [causal] vajra-holder as having the nature of the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena, which has been manifested by means of the five actual awakenings.⁸⁸

As for the subsequent yoga, Shantipa explains the meaning of “subsequent” as “resembling.” This yoga is therefore carried out in a way that resembles the five yogas⁸⁹ and is the yoga of the resultant vajra-holder.⁹⁰

The superior yoga is a deity yoga that is much more extensive than the previous two. It involves the union of the male and female deities and the full manifestation of the retinue of deities, which is first created in the lotus and then emanated forth and arranged in its respective place.⁹¹

The great yoga follows the superior yoga. As explained by Shridhara,⁹² this yoga comprises the steps of consecration as the awakened bodies, voices, and minds, and so forth, the drawing in of the pristine-awareness deities, and initiation plus sealing [with the lord of the family], offering and praise, tasting the nectar, and recitations [of mantra], up to and including the request that the pristine-awareness mandala depart and the withdrawal of the pledge deities.⁹³

In [Nagarjuna's] *Brief [Sadhana of Guhyasamaja]*, all four of the yogas being implemented in the initial union itself represents the system of the *Indestructible Garland Tantra*. [The four yogas] are not applied in their entirety to each individual deity but are performed, for the most part, within the scope of meditation on the circle [of deities] of the mandala.

THE SYSTEM OF THE RALI TANTRAS [4']

...There are many methods such as

The four dwellings: as a sphere, as water, as form, and beyond form.

The *Circle of the Sun* of the Rali tantras states:⁹⁴

As a sphere, as water, as form,
And as what is beyond form:
The tantras are truly none other
Than those four types of dwelling.

Thus, all aspects of the phase of creation are considered to be included in the four dwellings.

Dwelling as a sphere comprises [the steps] from the creation of the causal vajra-holder up to and including the emanation of the goddesses of the retinue.

Dwelling as water comprises [the steps] of the male and female deities being in union and their consequent transformation into seminal fluid.

Dwelling as form comprises the steps from urging [the deities] with

songs [to reappear] from that [fluid] and their arising as the resultant vajra-holders, up to and including initiation and sealing [by the lord of the family].

Dwelling as that which is beyond form follows [dwelling as form] and comprises the steps up to and including the dissolution of the mandala of the contemplation that is like the tip of a flame.⁹⁵

This framework of four dwellings represents the perspective of Drokmi⁹⁶ and his followers. In addition to that, there are a great number of subtle designations of ways of correlation and frameworks of correlation, such as Maitripa's condensation [of the practice] into the four seals.⁹⁷

THE SIX-BRANCH FRAMEWORK [cc]

The *Indestructible Tent* has six branches based on family or nature.

The *Indestructible Tent* states:⁹⁸

Having manifested the buddhas' place
 One meditates on the five aspects,
 The actual nature of Samantabhadra,
 Doing the sadhana of one's favored deity.
 With the mandala display complete,
 One carries out the meditation sequence
 Of offering, praise, tasting nectar, and so forth:
 This is considered to be the six-branch yoga.

That [verse] provides a general description from which stem extensive discussions. This system resembles that of the [*Hevajra Tantra*] *Two Examinations* and its commentaries composed by Durjayachandra and others⁹⁹ in that it incorporates all of the various practices of the phase of creation in the six branches based on distinctions of nature or family.¹⁰⁰ In this, there is parallelism with there being six practices or six branches¹⁰¹ for the liberative phase of completion and with there being six families [of buddhas] at the time of ultimate fruition. That being so, in this context of the purificatory means, the six branches are defined in the following way:

The creation of the residence, the celestial palace and its world system, and the creation of the resident [male and female] deities constitute the

branch of Vairochana, or that of earth.¹⁰² This is because form or body is the residence of all deities. Vairochana is the essence of the form aggregate of all transcendent ones. Hence, the creation of the celestial palace residence is based on that [branch of Vairochana].

The tasting of nectar is the branch of Amitabha, or that of water. This is because Amitabha represents indestructible speech. By tasting nectar, indestructible speech is satisfied.

Praise is the branch of Ratnasambhava, or that of fire. This is because what is called “praise” is the declaration of a person’s qualities. When five aspects [of the awakened state] are distinguished—awakened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities—Ratnasambhava represents the awakened qualities.

Offering is the branch of Amoghasiddhi, or that of wind. This is because Amoghasiddhi represents the action family, and therefore has the power [to perform] the actions of making offerings to buddhas and serving the welfare of beings.

Initiation is the branch of Akshobhya, or that of space. This is because the initiation of Akshobhya is the water initiation, and water is the essence of Akshobhya.¹⁰³

Passion is the branch of Vajrasattva, or that of pristine awareness. This is because it is during the act of passion that the deities of the retinue are emanated from the bodhichitta of the main male and female deities. In order for that to occur, the main deities must engage in the act of passion and that [passion] itself is explained as being Vajrasattva.¹⁰⁴

THE EIGHT-BRANCH FRAMEWORK [dd]

**The eight consecutive awakenings were introduced by
Jalandhara.**

The accomplished lord Jalandhara¹⁰⁵ introduced [a framework] called “the eight consecutive awakenings”: knowledge of the bases; knowledge of the paths; knowledge of all aspects; [yoga of] the manifestation of all aspects in their entirety; peak [yoga]; sequential [yoga]; instantaneous [yoga]; and the dimension of reality.¹⁰⁶ However, the details of this system will not be discussed here since it is not well known in this country [of Tibet].

THE TWELVE-BRANCH FRAMEWORK [cc]

The Kalachakra tantra is presented in a twelve-branch framework.

According to the omniscient Lord of Dharma [Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltzen]¹⁰⁷ and his disciples, the main points [of the creation phase] of the Kalachakra system are all contained in four branches:¹⁰⁸ [one,] full manifestation of the form, the branch of familiarization or the supremely victorious mandala; [two,] the branch of near attainment or the supremely victorious action; [three,] full manifestation of the vital essence, the branch of attainment or the yoga of vital essence; and [four,] full manifestation of bliss, the branch of great attainment or the subtle yoga.¹⁰⁹

However, the majority of lineage holders of the past, principally the followers of Tsami¹¹⁰ such as the eminent [Third Karmapa] Gyalwa Rangjung,¹¹¹ adhered to a formulation of twelve branches: [one,] creation of the celestial palace and the seats [of the deities]; [two,] creation of the main figures, male and female, by means of the five actual awakenings; [three,] the creation of the mandala of the residence and residents in the womb of the female deity and subsequent emission, which constitutes the supremely victorious mandala; [four,] drawing into the [deities of the] mandala all sentient beings of the six classes and conferring initiation on them; [five,] urging with songs the main figures, male and female, who have melted, [to reappear]; [six,] the reappearance, in three steps, of the main [deities] in their form dimensions; [seven,] the dissolution of the deities of the mandala [into the main figures] and the creation and emission [of the deities], which constitute the supremely victorious action; [eight,] summoning and drawing in the pristine-awareness deities; [nine,] initiation; [ten,] sealing by the lord of the family and consecration by means of the four vajras; [eleven,] the yoga of vital essence; and [twelve,] the subtle yoga. Furthermore, those lineage holders correlated the twelve branches with the elements to be purified (the twelve links of dependent origination of existence) and with the results of purification (the twelve aspects of the meaning of truth),¹¹² and so forth.

AN ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORK [ff]

There is also an elaborate framework related to the purity of the major marks.

In addition, there is an elaborate framework of thirty-two steps [formulated] by Jalandhara and Rahulaguha,¹¹³ wherein the steps¹¹⁴ represent the means to attain the purity of the thirty-two major marks of a great being:¹¹⁵

Circle of offerings [1], the four divine states [2],
 The supreme [3], the innate [deity] [4], one's favored deity [5],
 The circle of protection [6], emancipation [7], the charnel
 grounds [8],
 The [multi-]storied celestial palace [9], the causal mandala [10],
 The descent of seminal fluid [11], the manifestation [12],
 The placement [13], the embodiment of anger [14], the emission [15],
 The pristine-awareness mandala [16], initiation [17], sealing [18],
 Tasting of the nectar [19], the welfare of beings [20],
 The six branches [21], luminous clarity [22], emergence [23],
 Mantra recitation [24], sacrificial food offering [25], subtle
 yoga [26],
 The second placement [27], the way of being [28], eating [29],
 Conduct [30], sleeping [31], and re-emerging [32].¹¹⁶

4. VISUALIZATION SEQUENCES

- ii. Visualization Sequences [II.B.1.c.ii]
 - aa. Characteristics of the Practitioner
 - bb. Places for Practice
 - cc. Time [and Duration] of Practice
 - dd. Requisite Elements for Practice
 - ee. Methods of Practice
 - 1' The Preamble
 - 2' The Extensive Discussion
 - a' The Yoga of Contemplative Equipoise
 - i' Preliminary Steps in the Sadhana
 - ii' The Main Practice of the Creation Phase
 - aa' The Celestial Palace Residence
 - bb' The Resident Deities
 - cc' The Branches That Complete the Sequence
 - iii' A General Framework: Four [Key Elements]
 - Used as the Path; plus Ancillary Points
 - aa' Four [Key Elements] Used as the Path
 - bb' Developing Clarity in Visualization
 - cc' Sealing with Bliss and Emptiness
 - dd' Recollecting the Purity
 - ee' Dissolution and Re-emergence
 - b' The Yoga of Informal Contemplation

[This chapter continues the discussion of the process of entering pristine awareness in the phase of creation. What follows now is] part two: the

visualization sequences that incorporate the [above] branches. This discussion is presented in eight parts: the characteristics of the practitioner; the particular places for practice; the time [and duration] of practice; requisite elements for the period of practice; methods of practice; how the purificatory means correspond to the bases of purification; how the purificatory means correspond to the results of purification; and how [creation-phase methods] act as ripening agents for the phase of completion. [In this chapter, the first five parts are treated.]

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRACTITIONER [aa]

A practitioner of the visualization sequences consisting of those branches

Has received initiation and observes pledges. ...

[Certain requirements must be fulfilled] in order to cultivate the visualization sequences that consist of the branches just described. To begin with, the meditator must possess three special qualities, along with [knowledge of] the methods of mind training in the common and uncommon paths. These qualities have been discussed in previous [sections of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*].¹ In particular, motivated by a firm conviction in the indestructible way, the individual must have received the ripening initiation and must abide by the pledges and vows that he or she has accepted at the time of the initiation. The *Sarvabuddhasamayoga* states:²

He who has never entered a pure mandala,
Or has forsaken all his pledges and vows,
Or lacks knowledge of the secret principle,
In spite of practice, will accomplish nothing.³

PLACES FOR PRACTICE [bb]

...The place is consonant with one's disposition.

The [type of] place needed for cultivation of the phase of creation is described in the *Guhyasamaja Root Tantra*.⁴

Practice in regions of great isolation
Where flowers and fruit [trees] adorn

And in the seclusion of the mountains;
There, all types of powers are gained.⁵

[Buddhashrijana's *Sadhana Called*] *Samantabhadra* states:⁶

Somewhere in a mountainous region,
With the beauty of fine and stately trees
And the finest crystal-clear waters,
One should practice, Lord Manjushri.⁷

Furthermore, most *sadhanas* speak of [staying] “in a place that is secluded and pleasant.” Accordingly, a place used for general purposes should be one that is isolated and where all the necessary elements are available. Places used for specific purposes are described in the chapter [Means of] Attainment [of the *Kalachakra Concise Tantra*]:⁸

Be it a lovely grove of trees, a mountain, a place of Buddhist
pilgrimage, a deserted shrine of a god,
A place where an adept [has stayed], a charnel ground, the shore of
a lake or [other water-side setting], an auspicious location, or a
concealed site—
In whatever place you feel perfectly content—there you should
practice, O King!

A lovely grove of trees is the ideal place to do dominating and summoning rites; a mountain, to do [rites of] stupefying, paralyzing, and piercing with daggers [obstructive forces]; a place where the Buddha [stayed] (i.e., the location of a major reliquary of the Buddha),⁹ to gain the eight powers;¹⁰ a deserted shrine of a god or the shores of a large body of water or similar setting, to do [the rites of] driving out and separating. A [power] place where an accomplished master has stayed is ideal for attaining power related to the action seal;¹¹ a charnel ground, for secret practice;¹² a lake or auspicious location (i.e., a rich and thriving settlement or town), for [rites of] appeasement and enrichment;¹³ a well-concealed hollow in the earth or a rock cave, for gaining sovereignty over the three worlds [i.e., awakening].

Furthermore, it is said that one should practice in any place that seems agreeable and where one feels content; simply stated, this means a place in consonance with one's own disposition.

TIME [AND DURATION] OF PRACTICE [cc]

**In the beginning, one practices at night; once stability is gained,
at all times.**

A beginning practitioner of the mantra way, in the majority of cases, will more easily achieve clarity of the visualized image by cultivating deity yoga at night. Once stability [in that clarity] has been gained, he or she can meditate at all times, throughout day and night.

As for duration, someone who is practicing mainly the phase of creation, or wishes [to gain] ordinary powers, or wishes to carry out subtle activation rites using special techniques¹⁴ [should] meditate until he or she has attained stability in terms of clarity of image in deity yoga. That is said to be accomplished normally within a year.

As for the time needed to achieve results in ordinary activation rites such as fire offering and *yantra*,¹⁵ a person who abides by the pledges, is energetic and persevering, and shows strong determination in the application of the rites—even if he or she has not gained stability in terms of clarity of visualized image—can still succeed in these activations by reciting the prescribed number of mantras in the manner set forth [in the tantras]. One should therefore meditate for as long as that requires.

REQUISITE ELEMENTS FOR PRACTICE [dd]

**One relies on fortitude, qualified assistants, and ritual
implements.**

The practitioner must never lack the requisite elements of fortitude, assistants, and implements. To possess fortitude [means to show] unrelenting perseverance that, despite adverse circumstances, and even at the risk of one's life, is not relaxed until the intended goal has been achieved. "Assistants" means male or female helpers who possess the qualifications described in the tantras. "Implements" means the prescribed ritual articles, a drawing of one's deity and hand implements such as vajra, bell, small drum, and skull-cup, and the [mundane] articles of food, drink, and clothing.

METHODS OF PRACTICE [ee]

A preamble is followed by an extensive discussion.

THE PREAMBLE [1']

The meditation entails both contemplative equipoise and informal contemplation.

THE EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION [2']

The methods of practice are presented in two parts: the yoga of contemplative equipoise; and the yoga of informal contemplation.

THE YOGA OF CONTEMPLATIVE EQUIPOISE [a']

This section has three parts: the preliminary steps of the sadhana; the main practice of the phase of creation; and a general framework¹⁶ in which four key elements are used as the path, plus ancillary points.

PRELIMINARY STEPS IN THE SADHANA [i']

**The preliminary steps to equipoise are to appease obstructive forces, dispel adverse conditions,
And create favorable ones. ...**

There are three steps preliminary to cultivating contemplative equipoise: [giving sacrificial food offerings, visualizing a circle of protection, and fostering positive potential and pristine awareness].

The first is making sacrificial [food] offerings¹⁷ to [non-human] obstructive beings in order to appease them. This is done in the following way: In one's place of practice, one assembles all the [requisite] ritual articles. Then, while keeping to the specifications [in the sadhana] regarding meditation posture, the direction to face, meditation mat, and so forth, one offers sacrificial [food] to elemental spirits¹⁸ before [any other step]. *Two Examinations* states:¹⁹

At this point, to propitiate the elemental spirits by making sacrificial offerings will bring excellent [results] to yogins.²⁰

The *Ocean of Dakinis Tantra* and Saroruha's elucidation of that tantra²¹ explain that, as the first step in sadhana practice, one [should] make a sacrificial offering. This offering serves to pacify obstacles caused by obstructive forces and misleading [spirits]. *Two Examinations* states:²²

In order to protect the lives of all beings
Against obstructive and misleading forces,
Vajrasattva prescribed sacrificial offerings.

The second step consists in visualizing a circle of protection in order to dispel adverse conditions. There are many [types of] protection circles described [in the tantras]. The common protection circle entails imagining such details as the ground, enclosing fence, and tent, [all] formed of vajra-crosses.²³ The special protection circle [involves meditation] on ten wrathful deities arranged on the spokes of a ten-spoked golden wheel,²⁴ who annihilate all obstructive forces.²⁵ Both those methods are described in the *Indestructible Tent* and in the *Guhyasamaja* tantras.

Abhayakaragupta explains that for the protection circles of most sadhanas [one visualizes] the deity Humkara positioned at the hub of the wheel, with ten wrathful figures on the spokes. He also discusses the various actions [to be carried out] in cases of obstructive forces causing serious harm, such as summoning the obstructive forces and piercing them with daggers.²⁶

For the protection circle in the Chakrasamvara cycle of tantras, [one imagines] wrathful deities positioned on the spokes of an eight- or ten-spoked wheel²⁷ within a common protection circle [i.e., the vajra tent], who pierce [obstructive forces] with daggers, and so forth. [As another method,] by [uttering] the four-faced mantra, the cardinal and intermediate directions are sealed; then, the female guardians of the gates and the intermediate directions arise from that mantra and pierce [obstructive forces] with daggers, and so on.²⁸

The third step comprises two types of fostering [that of positive potential and that of pristine awareness] in order to establish conducive conditions.

The fostering of positive potential is described in the *Indestructible Tent*:²⁹

Offerings to one's master, a vajra-holder,
 Perfect fulfillment of the sevenfold [service],
 Forming the mind of awakening, ...³⁰

The fostering of pristine awareness is explained in the *Indestructible Tent, Two Examinations*, and other scriptures, as meaning meditation on emptiness. One meditates on the meaning of the mantra *om svabhava [shuddhah sarva dharmah svabhava shuddho ham]*: all phenomena—the apprehended and [oneself,] the apprehender—are naturally pure, devoid of inherent nature, emptiness; and on the meaning of the mantra *om shunyata [jnana vajra svabhavatmakam ham]*: [oneself is] the essential nature of the indivisibility of such emptiness, which is the object, and pristine awareness, the subject.

To expand, all phenomena are primordially devoid of an inherent essence, nature, or identity, and are therefore free from all elaborations of superimposition: unborn emptiness. According to the works of great tantric adepts, once one has resolved that with certainty and become well acquainted with that view, one brings to mind that [unborn emptiness]. Someone who is not well acquainted with that view must ascertain the emptiness [of all phenomena] through examination. Some scholars call these two approaches “forceful meditation on emptiness” and “meditation on emptiness based on examination,” respectively.³¹

Some texts state that at this point [of the sadhana] one meditates on emptiness following the dissolution of the environment and inhabitants into luminous clarity. To do that, however, one needs both to remain without any conceptions once the appearances of the environment and inhabitants have been withdrawn into luminous clarity and to have present in one's mind the emptiness that is the meaning of [the above] mantras.

Some assert that, at this point, in order to generate a clear visualization of the pure residence and pure resident deities, and so forth, one meditates that the impure environment along with its inhabitants is a voidness that is nothing whatsoever. However, this is not what is meant [by contemplation on emptiness].

The purpose of contemplation on emptiness is as explained by Lord Atisha [in his *Analysis of the Sequence of Visualization*]:³²

The reason for saying the two mantras³³ three times each in that way is to enable one to realize emptiness, to nurture one's

awareness of emptiness, to abide firmly [in the understanding of emptiness], to perfect the fostering of pristine awareness, to overcome ordinary concepts of body, speech, and mind, and to understand the residence and the resident [deities] as the [magical] display of emptiness.

THE MAIN PRACTICE OF THE CREATION PHASE [ii']

This discussion has three parts: creation of the celestial palace of residence; creation of the resident deities; and the branches that complete the sequence.

THE CELESTIAL PALACE RESIDENCE [aa']

... For the main practice, one creates a celestial residence.

The visualization of the celestial palace of residence is the first step in entering the main practice of the creation phase. The base for the generation of the palace, according to most of the principal texts, is the creation of a tetrahedral source of phenomena, the tiers of the [four] elements, and so forth.³⁴ There are several different presentations of the visualization of the base:

As one way, a vajra-cross is generated from the melting of the tiers of the [four] elements, and the celestial palace is created in the center of that.

As another, the celestial palace is created from the melting of the tiers of elements, and so forth, within a tetrahedron and in the center of a multicolored lotus and vajra-cross.

As another, the celestial palace is created within a tetrahedron and on top of a multicolored lotus and vajra-cross, without the tiers of the elements.

As yet another, both the celestial palace and deity are created simultaneously above the tiers of elements and Mount Meru and in the center of a multicolored lotus and vajra-cross.

In addition, there are various other descriptions, such as the celestial palace generated from the syllable *bhrum*; from a wheel; from the melting of [the form of] Vairochana; and so forth.

As to [the form of] the celestial palace, *Two Examinations* states:³⁵

The Teacher described the mandala
As four-sided and glowing radiantly,
With four portals, utterly resplendent,

Bedecked with jewel tassels and loops,
A variety of garlands and yak-tail fans,
And beautified by eight supporting pillars.

The *Abhidhana Tantra* states:³⁶

With a portal on each of four sides,
It is ornamented by four archways,
Beautified by lattices and streamers,
Adorned with garlands and banners.

Details such as these are found in all the different tantras.³⁷

The [systems of] Chakrasamvara, Hevajra, and other tantras explain that charnel grounds are to be imagined outside the celestial palace. The *Samvarodaya Tantra* instructs one to imagine the charnel ground within the vajra fence [i.e., between the palace and the vajra fence]; the *Vajradaka* [tantra], beyond the garland of light [i.e., beyond the flames surrounding the vajra fence]. [The names of] the charnel grounds are stated in the *Samvarodaya Tantra*.³⁸

Violently Hostile; Wild Thicket;
Blazing Vajra; Place of Skeletons;
In the northeast, Terrifying Laughter;
The southeast, Supreme Auspiciousness;
The southwest, Fearsome Darkness;
And the northwest, Sounding *Kili Kili*.³⁹

Special features of each charnel ground, such as the tree and guardian of the direction, are also described extensively [in the tantras].⁴⁰

An additional element related to the celestial palace is the visualization of seats [formed of] a lotus, and so forth, for all deities of the mandala within the palace.

THE RESIDENT DEITIES [bb']

Next, one meditates on the circle of resident deities in its entirety
Using the creation methods—creation by means of the five
actual awakenings,

Creation in four vajra steps, and creation by means of the three rites.

The first comprises moon, sun, seed-syllable, merging, and deity manifestation;

The second, emptiness, seed-syllable, deity manifestation, and syllable placement;

And the third, seed-syllable, insignia, and full manifestation of the deity's body.

Upon completion of the creation of the residence (the celestial palace as well as the seats), one meditates upon the entire circle of the resident deities. There are three main methods to perform that creation: creation by means of the five actual awakenings; creation in four vajra steps; and creation by means of three rites. (These three sets should be correlated with the last three lines, respectively, [of the above root text].)

The first of these entails the following visualizations: [First, one imagines that] above a seat formed of a lotus, and so forth, a moon disk arises from the vowels. [Second,] a sun disk arises from the consonants. [Third,] between the two disks is imagined the insignia of the deity marked with the seed-syllable, from which light is emanated and then withdrawn. [Fourth,] all these elements merge. [Fifth,] from the merged elements, the body of the deity fully manifests.

Those steps are referred to as “creation by means of the five actual awakenings,” which *Two Examinations* explains as being awakening by means of mirror[-like] pristine awareness (the moon); awakening by means of the pristine awareness of sameness (the sun); awakening by means of the discerning pristine awareness (the seed-syllable and insignia); awakening by means of the pristine awareness of accomplishment (the merging of everything); and awakening by means of the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena (the full manifestation of the deity's body).

In major tantric texts, one finds other versions of the five actual awakenings having the same names but differing in meaning. However, it is generally explained that the moon symbolizes the white vital essence; the sun, the red vital essence; and the seed-syllable, the consciousness of the intermediate-state being. The merging of all these elements corresponds to conception; and the full manifestation of the deity's body, to birth from a womb.

The second is creation in four vajra steps. In this procedure, [the first step is] to meditate on emptiness. [The second is] to imagine, positioned

on a lotus, sun, and other seats, a moon, sun, and seed-syllable, from which lights emanate and then converge. [The third is] to imagine the full manifestation of the deity resulting from that [converging of the lights and transformation of the seed-syllable]. [The fourth is] to visualize three syllables at the deity's three places [head, throat, and heart], and so forth.⁴¹ These four vajra steps are taught in the *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra*, as well as in *Two Examinations*.⁴²

First is the awakening by means of emptiness,
 Second is the converging upon the seed-syllable,
 Third is full manifestation of the [deity's] body,
 And fourth is placement of the syllables;
 By means of these four vajra steps one should
 Perform the ordinary familiarization practice.

The third is creation by means of three vajra rites. In this procedure, [the first rite is] to imagine the deity's seed-syllable on a seat formed of a lotus, sun, and so forth. [The second rite is] to imagine that the seed-syllable transforms into the [deity's] insignia marked by the [same] seed-syllable. [The third rite is] to imagine that the insignia transforms into the full manifestation of the deity's body. These rites are taught in *Two Examinations* and other tantras.

The above three sets constitute general descriptions of creation methods. In addition, there are many specifications, such as including or not including [the step known as] urging with songs the molten form [of the deity]; requiring or not requiring both the causal vajra-holder and resultant vajra-holder; and so on.

The symbolism of the step of urging with songs being included [in a sadhana] is explained as follows: At a time when there are no beings suitable to be trained, the buddhas abide exclusively in the dimension of great bliss. When the time comes to train beings, the buddhas manifest in form bodies and then perform deeds that will serve the welfare of sentient beings. Corresponding [to the manifesting of buddhas] is the [step of] urging [the deity] with songs [to arise from] the molten form, as a result of which [the deity] manifests. As to the symbolism of [the sadhana] not including the step of urging with songs, [it is explained that] the buddhas, for the benefit of others, may continuously abide as form bodies, not disappearing for even a single instant. Corresponding to that, [the step of] urging with songs is absent [from some sadhanas].

The creation of the causal and the resultant vajra-holders may be carried out in different ways. Both may be created by means of the five actual awakenings or else by following the three rites. Also, the causal vajra-holder and the resultant vajra-holder may be identical in color and [number and appearance of] faces and arms or may be dissimilar. There are many variations, and therefore this creation is not restricted to a single way.

Moreover, the creation of the deities of the retinue may be performed in various ways: creation by means of the five actual awakenings, creation by means of the three rites, or creation based on the essential seed-syllable alone.

Most sadhanas include [the step known as] the placement of the three beings [the pledge-being, the pristine-awareness being, and the contemplation-being]. The pledge-being means the particular deity generated through ritual steps⁴³ and therefore is one and the same as the deity [being meditated upon]. The pristine-awareness being is imagined at the heart of the pledge deity on seats such as a lotus, sun, and so forth. It may be visualized in different ways: as a deity identical to the pledge deity; as a deity unlike the pledge deity in color and [appearance and number of] faces and arms; or as an insignia that has arisen from a seed-syllable. The contemplation-being is visualized as the seed-syllable or insignia in the heart of the pristine-awareness being. In cases where the pristine-awareness being is to be visualized in the form of an insignia, the contemplation-being would be represented by the form of the seed-syllable. In this [step], the placement of the three beings may be done for all the deities or for only the main deities.

Consecration of the sense fields, and so forth, is taught in the majority of tantric texts. In many cases, the consecration consists in visualizing deities at the senses, who are generated simply from their seed-syllables. Some works set forth the creation method of three rites, while others dispense with the visualization of the deities and instruct one to imagine the deities' seed-syllables alone positioned at the senses.

THE BRANCHES THAT COMPLETE THE SEQUENCE [cc']

Completing branches include drawing in the pristine-awareness mandala,

Conferring initiation, sealing of five types, and offering with praise.

The *Indestructible Tent* [*Tantra*] presents the branches that complete the creation[-phase] contemplation: the drawing in of the pristine-awareness mandala, [conferral of initiation, sealing of different types, and nectar-tasting, offering, and praise].

To draw in the pristine-awareness beings, one imagines that rays of light [radiating] from the seed-syllable at one's heart invite from its natural abode the pristine-awareness mandala—the residence and its residents—which resembles the mandala being meditated upon. Offerings, and so forth, are performed, and then the pristine-awareness mandala is made to merge with the circle of pledge deities. Thereupon, one has a firm conviction that these two mandalas have become of a single flavor.

In some [sadhana], the invitation is made by means of the sound of *vam*, or by the sound of the joy of the union [of the male and female deities], and so on. The invitation may be of the pristine-awareness deities alone, without the celestial palace, or of the buddhas and bodhisattvas from every direction, [their forms] not necessarily identical to the pledge deities, and so forth. There are many different systems of invitation.

As to the purpose of the drawing in of the pristine-awareness mandala, [Abhayakaragupta's] *Awn of Esoteric Instructions* explains that to have total conviction that all the transcendent ones are of a single identity will ensure belief in the sameness [of oneself and the deities]. Moreover, [in his *Analysis of the Sequence of Visualization*]⁴⁴ Atisha notes that this [step] serves the purposes of stopping the notion that oneself and the pristine-awareness deities are separate, of reinforcing the pride of being indivisible from them, and of being consecrated as such.

Conferral of initiation is the next [branch]. One imagines that rays of light [radiating] from the seed-syllable at one's heart invite the initiating deities, to whom one makes offerings and requests [to initiate one]. The deities then bestow the initiation. The initiating deities—in most tantric texts, identical to the meditated mandala figures—confer the initiation in great number.

As to the initiation that is conferred [here], the majority of tantric works mention only the water initiation. Saroruha and Atisha, however, discuss the conferral of all four initiations.⁴⁵ Some maintain that in order to meditate on the phase of creation alone, only the vase initiation is appropriate at this point, while to practice the phase of creation in combination with the phase of completion, all four are necessary. However, that is not definitive.

The purpose of conferring initiation is to cleanse oneself of the stains [that need] to be removed and to establish the potency required to accomplish one's goal. Atisha delineates eight purposes of initiation:⁴⁶ to dispel obstructive forces, to remove obscurations, to eliminate [the peril of falling into] inferior paths, to make oneself fit for recitation and meditation, to gain the power to perform the activations of appeasing, and so on,⁴⁷ to make amends for the deterioration of the awakening mind, [to make amends for the deterioration of vows and pledges], and to be initiated by the buddhas in the future.

Sealing [is the next branch].⁴⁸ Although this branch is presented in many ways, Jetsun Drakpa⁴⁹ describes [seals] as follows:

Seals can symbolize all of the paths and results of the indestructible way in general. By symbolizing what is encompassed by the phase of creation, they can symbolize all paths. Seals are five in number: the seal of essential reality on what is essential reality; the seal of mind on form; the seal of form on mind; the seal of the result on the cause; and the seal of the cause on the result.

Those words in themselves represent secret meaning of great significance. The meanings of those five seals are explained in this way:

[One,] the seal of essential reality on what is essential reality (also called the “seal of the nature on what holds the nature”) is to know that all phenomena, which are pure in nature, are [in truth] pure in nature. Symbols of that would be Hevajra and his consort [Nairatmya] sealed by Akshobhya.⁵⁰

[Two,] the seal of mind on form is to understand that all phenomena—the outer [environment] and inner [sentient beings]—are not other than one's own mind. Symbols of that would be [yoginis] Pukkasi and Gauri, essence of Vairochana, the purity of the aggregate of forms, sealed by Akshobhya, the essence of mind.

[Three,] the seal of form on mind is mind itself manifesting in all of its various displays, the protection circle, the celestial palace, and external matter, that is to say, mind as form. Symbols of that would be [yoginis] Shavari and Chauri, essence of Akshobhya, the purity of [the aggregate of] consciousnesses, sealed by Vairochana, the essence of forms.

[Four,] the seal of the result on the cause is the consecration of the impure (the aggregates, elements, and sense fields) as the pure (the five families of transcendent ones, the bodhisattvas, and the like). This means meditation on the seed of the result, present in and connected to the cause. Symbols of that would be [yoginis] Chandali and Vetali, the purity of [the aggregate of] recognitions, essence of Amitabha, who represents attachment (the cause [of avarice]), sealed by Ratnasambhava, the purity of avarice (avarice being the result of attachment).

[Five,] the seal of the cause on the result is the manifestation of the pure (the five families and the five pristine awarenesses) from the transformation of their [respective] causes, the aggregates and emotional afflictions. Symbols of that would be [yoginis] Dombini and Ghasmari,⁵¹ the purity of [the aggregate of] mental formations, essence of Amoghasiddhi, who represents jealousy (the result [of attachment]), sealed by Amitabha, the purity of attachment (attachment being the cause of jealousy).

Moreover, there are descriptions of the mutual sealing of family and possessor of family, the mutual sealing of what is created and agent of creation, and the mutual sealing of [other types of] cause and result.⁵² These are presented in [Vajragarbha's] *Commentary [Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra]*.⁵³

As to its purpose, sealing ensures that, in the effort to gain ordinary powers and the supreme power [of awakening], meditation is carried out without mistaking family. The [*Hevajra Tantra*] *Two Examinations* states:⁵⁴

A seal is a sign or mark by which
 A family can be symbolized.
 Meditation in which the family is mistaken
 Yields neither powers nor achievements.⁵⁵

[The last branch comprises] the tasting of nectar, offering, and praise, for which there are many procedures, varying according to each individual tantric text.⁵⁶ All are performed with the knowledge that the object to whom one offers, the offerings themselves, and the act of offering are [in nature] unborn emptiness.

The purpose [of nectar-tasting, offering, and praise] is to bring about the understanding that all objects of experience, the sensory pleasures, and so forth, are the immaculate expression of bliss and emptiness.

A GENERAL FRAMEWORK: FOUR [KEY ELEMENTS] USED AS THE PATH; PLUS ANCILLARY POINTS [iii']

This section has five parts: the main [part, the key elements] used as the path; the way to develop clarity of the visualized image; sealing with bliss and emptiness; recollecting the purity [i.e., symbolism]; and dissolution and re-emergence.

FOUR [KEY ELEMENTS] USED AS THE PATH [aa']

**Four key elements are used as the path: form, imagination,
result, and transformative power.**

Tibetan masters of the past designated four [key elements] to be used as the path in all [types of] the creation phase and completion phase.

First, using form as the path is to meditate on forms that accord with those of the result [of awakening] and in that way to achieve clear images [of those forms], thereby stopping impure appearances. This is similar to imagining [the object of one's sexual desire as] a skeleton and in that way achieving a clear image [of him or her in that form], at which point one stops [the arising of] sexual desire.

[Second,] using [the force of] imagination as the path is to make those [visualized] forms [of awakening] a reality. This is similar to Shariputra's using his imagination to transform the fires of the Hell of Ceaseless Suffering into water.⁵⁷

[Third,] using the result as the path is to meditate on the result, that is, the very goal to be attained, and thereby to achieve that goal. This is similar to meditating on the coarse and peaceful aspects [of different levels within the realms of existence], whereby one achieves states of meditative stability.⁵⁸

[Fourth,] using transformative power as the path is to turn ordinary body and mind into pristine awareness by means of the transformative powers of the buddhas and other awakened beings, similar to the way cow dung can be turned into gold when transformative powers are applied.⁵⁹

The first comprises all the steps related to the deity's form and [the union of] bliss and emptiness. The middle two are applied in all the steps related to the deity's form in the context of the phase of creation. The last comprises the following steps: the drawing into oneself of the host of pristine-

awareness deities; visualizing oneself and one's channels and vital essences as deities, thereby being consecrated as deities; and the recitation of mantra, making offerings and [special] sacrificial [food] offerings, and so on. However, the most important element is as stated [by Vajraghantapa]:⁶⁰

That which arises solely and instantaneously
From the transformative power of the master.

That is to say, devotion to the master and the transformative power of the master are used as the path to realize the great seal.⁶¹

DEVELOPING CLARITY IN VISUALIZATION [bb']

Having fulfilled all four, one ensures that practice leads to
freedom by bringing forth
Clear images of coarse and subtle aspects in all visualizations and
by making one's pride firm.

Once one has fulfilled the crucial points of all four key elements (as just described), one must ensure that the crucial points that can lead to freedom are fulfilled even in meditation based on imagination. Therefore, the beginner should repeatedly bring forth clear images in both the coarse and subtle [aspects of visualization]. The coarse [aspect] refers to the body of the deity in the phase of creation which merely resembles [the actual body] endowed with seven features.⁶² The subtle refers to the clear image of the deity, through which one is shifted to realization of the phase of completion.⁶³ Moreover, one practices the meditation with exceptionally firm pride in regarding oneself as the coarse or the subtle deity. These are the crucial points of the pith instruction known as “using imagination as the path.”

SEALING WITH BLISS AND EMPTINESS [cc']

The manifestation is that of the deity, while its essence is beyond
conceptual elaborations.
One incapable of that seals the deity with emptiness by means of
ascertainment

And seals it with bliss elicited by subtle and vital-essence yogas or
by the wind yogas
Of the upper and lower nose-tips. ...

Whenever one trains in the phase of creation in that way [presented above], one must understand that everything that arises to the mental consciousness—the mandala on the appearance side—is merely relative appearance, devoid of inherent nature, ultimately emptiness. Then, with that understanding, one must train in the contemplation [that realizes everything to be] like an illusion. Finally, one must manifest the pristine awareness in which the appearance of the deity (with the pride of being the deity), while arising unceasingly, and blessed with the bliss elicited by the melting [of the vital essence], is of an essence beyond all limits of conceptual elaborations.

If one is not yet capable of that, one should seal the clear image [of the deity] with emptiness by means of conclusive ascertainment of everything being emptiness; and one should seal the clear image [of the deity] with bliss elicited by the melting [of vital essence]. In the mother tantras, such bliss is elicited by the subtle yoga of winds and the yoga of descent and reversal of vital essence;⁶⁴ and in the father tantras, by the training in wind-yoga techniques (*pranayama*) [connected to] the meditations of the yogas of the upper and lower nose-tips.⁶⁵

In summation, by sealing the clear image of the circle of deities with bliss and emptiness, the form of the body of the deity vividly manifests as the essence of bliss and emptiness. When this occurs, intense meditation on that essence causes the winds to dissolve within the central channel, whereupon one is shifted to the realization of the phase of completion. As a result, bliss arises. That bliss and the form of the deity are deliberately mixed with one another. Without any need for sealing, [the bliss and the clear image] are manifested simultaneously. This state wherein there is no interruption by thoughts is referred to as “abiding in undivided awareness.”⁶⁶ By cultivating that state, one comes to experience the signs of seeing and touching [the deity], at which point one abides in the yoga of realization.

There are many descriptions of the subtle and vital-essence yogas in this context, as well as many methods of meditating upon them. Therefore, these will not be elaborated upon out of concern [that the discussion become too lengthy]. One should refer to other types of works.

RECOLLECTING THE PURITY [dd']

...When visualization becomes wearisome,
One should recollect the purity of the deity, of ultimate reality,
and of self-knowing awareness.

The works of the great tantric adepts advise that, as one becomes weary of visualizing the deity, one should recollect its pure [nature]. Accordingly, [Prajñendraruchi's] *Blazing Jewel* [*Sadhana*] states:⁶⁷

A yogin unable to remain in absorption
Should bring to mind the pure [natures].

There are many presentations of ways to recollect purity. As for the pure [nature] of the relative deity, all [aspects of] the visualizations of deities [represent] the purities of the great qualities of buddhas. For example, *Two Examinations* states:⁶⁸

The red eyes of compassion
Are the purity of the three vajras;
The black limbs, a loving mind.⁶⁹

The human body's aggregates, elements, and so forth are pure in being deities. The *Guhyasamaja Tantra*, for instance, states:⁷⁰

The natures of the five aggregates
Are revealed to be the five buddhas;
The natures of earth, and so forth,
The four goddesses, Lochana and the others.⁷¹

The channels, vital essences, and other physical constituents are pure in being deities. For example, Luipa [in his *Sequence of Visualization of Chakrasamvara*] states:⁷²

The vital essences of the body
Are imagined as twenty-four heroes.⁷³

The [deity's] ornaments are pure in being mantras. For example, Luipa states:⁷⁴

The root mantras of the heroes, and so forth,
Are imagined as the thread of brahmins and the like.

As for the purity of ultimate reality, to know that all phenomena of cyclic existence and perfect peace are naturally pure, unborn emptiness, is the purity of the essential nature of things. *Two Examinations* states:⁷⁵

In the true sense, the purity of all things
Is said to be their reality just as it is.

The purity of self-knowing awareness, in relation to the phase of completion, is to know that everything is the expression of the innate, [the union of] bliss and emptiness. *Two Examinations* states:⁷⁶

The real purity is that of self-knowing awareness
And by no other purity may one be released.
Since the nature of all sense objects is pure, everything
Is the supreme bliss of self-knowing awareness.⁷⁷

The purpose of recollecting the purity, as asserted by masters, is to counteract the notion that the attributes of the path and those of the result are different.

DISSOLUTION AND RE-EMERGENCE [ce']

One trains for four sessions; at the end of each, one dissolves and re-emerges.

A yogin intent on cultivating the phase of creation will train for four sessions a day. These four sessions are delineated by Jalandhara [in his *Sadhana of Hevajra*]:⁷⁸

The phases referred to as “what are consecrated as four sessions” are the early morning, midday, late afternoon, and night [sessions]: these constitute the phase of meditation.

At the end of each session is the dissolution of the visualization: The environment and inhabitants, the residence and resident deities, are dissolved into oneself. Then, one also dissolves gradually into luminous clarity. Finally, one re-emerges from luminous clarity in the illusion-like form of the deity. Ghantapa states:⁷⁹

Having been manifested from the light of the seed-syllable,
The lord of wisdom, retinue, ground, and multi-storied palace
Become light again and are gradually dissolved.

THE YOGA OF INFORMAL CONTEMPLATION [b']

**Informal contemplation comprises the yogas of recitation,
sacrificial offerings,
Eating, passion, conduct, sleep, waking up, and cleansing.**

The yoga of informal contemplation (i.e., the post-meditation period) of the phase of creation consists of eight parts:

The first is the yoga of mantra [that involves] recitation, for which there are detailed presentations regarding the features of the chaplet used for the recitation; the visualization performed during the recitation; the mantra to be recited; and the prescribed number of recitations.

The second is the giving away of sacrificial [food] offerings. The sacrificial offering to the deity and the sacrificial offering to spirits can be separate or one and the same.⁸⁰ In the latter case, there are two systems, one in connection with the mandala [rite] and the other without that rite.

The third is the yoga of partaking of food and drink.

The fourth is the yoga of passion [performed with] an action seal.

The fifth is the yoga of conduct between formal meditation sessions.

The sixth is the yoga of sleep.

The seventh is the yoga of waking up at dawn.

The eighth is the yoga of purificatory cleansing.

Those yogas consist of many types of visualizations and practices which have not been elaborated on here.⁸¹

5. THE BASES OF PURIFICATION, PURIFICATORY MEANS, AND RESULTS OF PURIFICATION

- ff. How the Purificatory Means Correspond to the Bases of
Purification [Death, the Intermediate State, and Birth]
[II.B.1.c.ii.ff]
 - 1' The Process of Death and Its Purification
 - 2' The Intermediate State and Its Purification
 - 3' The Process of Birth and Its Purification
 - a' The Main Visualization Sequence
 - b' The Completing Methods and Their Symbolism
 - gg. How the Purificatory Means Correspond to the Results
of Purification
 - hh. How Creation-Phase Methods Act as Ripening Agents
for the Completion Phase
-

[This chapter concludes the discussion of the process of entering pristine awareness in the phase of creation. Presented here are the last three sections of part two, the visualization sequences: how the purificatory means correspond to the bases of purification; how the purificatory means correspond to the results of purification; and how creation-phase methods act as ripening agents for the phase of completion.]

HOW THE PURIFICATORY MEANS CORRESPOND TO THE BASES OF PURIFICATION [DEATH, THE INTERMEDIATE STATE, AND BIRTH] [ff]

If one does not first know the precise natures of the bases of purification, one will not understand correctly how the purificatory means correspond to them.¹ Therefore, what follows now is a general exposition of the natures of the bases of purification, presented in three parts: first, the way death occurs; then, the way the intermediate state arises subsequent to death; and lastly, the way birth takes place following the intermediate state. These three—birth, death, and the intermediate state—are said to be the bases of purification in the phase of creation and will be considered in this [discussion] principally from the perspective of human beings, who are endowed with the six elements.²

[DEATH]

The term “death” refers to the dissolution of the five aggregates, four elements, six sense powers, five objects, and five pristine awarenesses, that is to say, the twenty-five coarse psychophysical constituents, and so forth, of a human being. There are numerous signs that indicate the dissolution of those constituents. However, the process of dying can be summarized as follows:

[First,] the coarse constituents (the four elemental properties) dissolve [in sequence]: The earth element of the body dissolves into the element of water. Consequently, one is unable to move the body or control it (the external sign), and consciousness seems to be like a smoky haze (the internal sign).

The water element dissolves into the fire element. Consequently, the body’s fluids—sweat, saliva, and so on—dry up (the external sign); consciousness seems like a shimmering mirage (the internal sign), and the thirty-three conceptions that have evolved from aversion are stopped.

The element of fire dissolves into the wind element. Consequently, the warmth withdraws from the extremities of the body (the external sign); consciousness seems to be like fireflies (the internal sign), and the forty conceptions that have evolved from attachment are stopped.

The wind element dissolves into consciousness. Consequently, exhalations become longer and one can no longer inhale (the external sign);

consciousness seems like a perfectly still flame undisturbed by wind (the internal sign), and the seven conceptions that have evolved from delusion are stopped.³

Next, the subtle constituents (the three [stages of experience of] light) dissolve in the following manner: Consciousness dissolves into light, due to which one experiences a white brilliance, a vision that is like moonlight in a cloudless sky.

Light dissolves into the increase of light, due to which one experiences a red brilliance, a vision like sunlight in a cloudless sky.

The increase of light dissolves into the full culmination of light, due to which one experiences black brilliance, a vision like nighttime darkness pervading a cloudless sky. At that point, one's awareness diminishes, and becoming senseless, one falls into an unconscious state. Just as one regains consciousness, there manifests what is like a perfectly clear sky at dawn, not vitiated⁴ by the influences of moonlight, sunlight, and thick darkness; [this is the experience of] luminous clarity.⁵

[THE INTERMEDIATE STATE]

That [experience of] luminous clarity gives rise, once again, to the full culmination [of light]; then, in sequence, from the full culmination arises the increase of light, and from the increase of light, the light, the entire sequence occurring in an instant. Light gives rise to the eighty conceptions, whereupon is produced the body of the intermediate state, which is [simply] consciousness riding on the mount of wind.

According to [Pundarika's] *Great Commentary on the Kalachakra Tantra*, at first, for a brief period, the intermediate-state body appears in a form based on one's previous habitual tendencies [i.e., as the body of one's most recent life]. Then, gradually that form fades away, and there arises the appearance of the body of one's next life. It is further explained that that body, shaped according to what kind of birth one will take, is possessed of all its sense faculties. Because the body cannot be obstructed by matter, it has the miraculous power [of being able to move freely anywhere] with the exception of [not being able to exit] the mother's womb [once it has entered it]. Nourished by odors, the body enlarges. It can be seen by [other] intermediate-state beings who are of similar destinies⁶ and by those with pure divine sight. In seeking a place of birth and a source of odors, the intermediate-state being wanders every which way. The being is in an

extremely volatile state, experiencing a myriad of hallucinations, the quality of which is determined by whether previous actions have been positive or negative. The duration of this period is not fixed but it is never more than seven days.

If the being is unable to begin the birth process within those first seven days, it undergoes a minor death, which is like fainting for a short time, and again is born into the intermediate state. It may then begin the birth process within the [next] seven-day period. If even within that period, it still does not meet with the number of factors necessary for taking birth, it will inevitably [begin the process of] taking birth within forty-nine days [from the time of death].

A being who is to be born in the formless realm will not experience the intermediate state. Wherever one happens to die, in that very place, the aggregates of the formless realm come into being. A being who is to take birth in the desire realm or form realm will definitely experience the intermediate state.

[BIRTH]

Following the intermediate state, when the time comes to enter a [new] existence, a being will be born by one of four modes. If birth is to be miraculous, one begins to crave a place [to stay] and thereupon experiences some form of desire or aversion. As a result, one undergoes a minor death, which is like fainting for a short time, at the end of which one is born instantaneously in full form.

If birth is to be from heat and moisture, one experiences desire and aversion due to craving odors and tastes. As a result, one faints for a short time, after which one is born.

If birth is to be from a womb or egg, one experiences desire and aversion at the sight of one's parents copulating. As a result, one faints for a short time. After that, one [is conceived and] takes birth.⁷ In this case, the moving winds typical of the period in the intermediate state dissolve, whereupon light, the increase of light, the culmination of light, and subtle luminous clarity each manifest. When the light of full culmination again arises from that luminous clarity, one [is conceived and] takes birth. From the full culmination, there will manifest the increase of light; then, from the increase, light; and from that, the [eighty] conceptions.

From the wind that serves as the mount for the [mind of] light, there

arises the wind element, endowed with a special potency to support consciousness. From the wind element arises the fire element, with that same potency. From the fire element arises the water element, the same in potency. From the water element arises the earth element, the same in potency. From those elements, the aggregates and other constituents develop.

Next is explained the way one takes birth specifically through a human womb: The intermediate-state being sees [the future] father and mother in the act of copulation and then enters the father's mouth or top of his head. It then emerges from the father's secret place [penis] and enters the secret place [womb] of the mother, thereby being conceived as a new life in the midst of sperm and ovum.

That being then begins to develop within the womb. Since the sperm and ovum are composed of the four elements, [the developing embryo] derives stability from the earth element, cohesion from water, maturation from fire, and growth from wind. The embryo is gradually nurtured by the most refined essences of the blood, wind, and other constituents of the mother.

The *Samvarodaya* [*Tantra*]⁸ explains that the embryo in the first week is [an oval-shaped form, thin in consistency, called] *nur nur*. In the second, it is [of a thin pappy consistency, like a bubble on water, called] *mer mer*. In the third, it becomes [fleshy and oblong in shape, slightly harder than in the first week but unable to withstand pressure, called] *tar tar*. In the fourth, the embryo becomes [fleshy, more solid, with a soft membrane, now able to withstand pressure, called] *gor gor*. After that, it acquires the solidity of flesh, taking on a fish-like form, from which, in the fifth month, the protuberances of the limbs emerge. In the seventh month, hair, nails, and [the genitalia] appear. In the eighth month, the sense powers of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind manifest. In the ninth month, the body is completely formed. In the tenth month, it exits the womb.⁹

Next are explained the ways that the purificatory creation-phase methods correspond to the bases of purification. Generally, there are many distinctive features of the purificatory means that accord in features with the bases of purification (the [four] modes of birth, and so forth). However, for the time being, in order to facilitate comprehension of this subject, only the common correspondences will be discussed here.

In the case of someone who has accumulated the [particular] karma

that leads to birth from a womb, the bases of purification are the following: [the process of] dying, the subsequent experience of the intermediate state, conception in the womb of a mother in the human world, the formation of the body, being born once the body has fully developed, and engaging in the various activities of the particular existence.

The purificatory means that accord in features with those bases include the fostering [of positive potential] and [the fostering of pristine awareness through] meditation on emptiness, [visualization of] the celestial palace, [visualization of] the causal vajra-holder within the palace, imagining the *nada*¹⁰ or syllable entering the causal vajra-holder, the melting [of the causal vajra-holder], the urging with songs, and the manifestation of the resultant vajra-holder.

What follows now is a detailed exposition of the ways each [purificatory method] corresponds to its respective [object of purification], presented in three parts: the process of dying; the process of the intermediate state; and the process of taking birth.

THE PROCESS OF DEATH AND ITS PURIFICATION [1']

The bases to be purified are three processes: birth, death, and the intermediate state.

The death process, with its signs of dissolution of the twenty-five coarse constituents

And the three subtle constituents, is purified by fostering pristine awareness.

The bases to be purified by means of those purificatory creation-phase meditations are all contained in the three processes of taking birth, dying, and the intermediate state. To facilitate understanding, [in this discussion,] the visualization steps will be correlated with the bases of purification.

The accumulation of karma in one's previous life to be born in a [particular] existence accords with [and is purified by] the fostering of positive potential in relation to the [deity's] field for fostering [positive potential]. The process of death, characterized by the signs of dissolution of the twenty-five coarse and three subtle constituents, at the end of that life [accords with and] is purified by meditation on emptiness, the fostering of pristine awareness.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE AND ITS PURIFICATION [2']

After luminous clarity arise the three stages of light, the eighty
 conceptions,
 And the intermediate state, which is consciousness riding on the
 mount of wind.
 This process is purified by different means: the three syllables on
 the three faculties;
 The *ho* syllables and the *nada* for craving and grasping;
 an impression only; and so forth.

Following [the experience of] luminous clarity at death, the three [stages of] light and the eighty natures [i.e., conceptions] again arise, this time in the forward order. Thereafter is experienced the intermediate state, which is [just] consciousness riding on the mount of wind.

The environmental world into which the intermediate-state being will be born is purified by [the visualization of] tiers of elements, the celestial palace, and seat [of the deity].

The vision of the father and mother is purified by the causal vajra-holder, the male and female [figures].

Seeing the parents in the act of copulation whereupon the being is conceived in the womb is purified by the three syllables [marking] body, speech, and mind.

Craving and grasping¹¹ are purified by the *nada* or syllable entering [the causal vajra-holder] while sustained by two *ho* syllables, or simply by the *nada* or syllable entering [the causal vajra-holder].

To symbolize that [the intermediate-state being] does not have a coarse body and exists simply on the basis of a subtle mental body, in some [sadhana] the form of the intermediate-state being is simply a mental impression, without there being an actual symbol for it. [In other sadhanas] (to explain “and so forth” [in the root text]), the intermediate-state being does not manifest even as a mental impression, except for when it is imagined as a seed-syllable.¹² This [formless] purificatory step accords with the intermediate state of those beings who experience it for an extremely brief period—remaining no more than the briefest moment of time—as is the duration of the transmigration of a leech.

The melting of the causal vajra-holder, the male and female figures, is

the purificatory step that accords with the parents' blank state of mind following orgasm.

THE PROCESS OF BIRTH AND ITS PURIFICATION [3']

This section has two parts: the main visualization sequence; and the steps that complete [the creation phase] and their symbolism.

THE MAIN VISUALIZATION SEQUENCE [a']

That being's birth is influenced¹³ by various factors to which the creation methods correspond:

Urging the molten form with songs and emanation from the space accord with womb birth;

Creation by moon and sun, insignia, and merging accords with birth from an egg;

Creation by moon and seed-syllable alone, with birth from heat and moisture;

And creation of the full form instantaneously, with miraculous birth.

The process whereby the intermediate-state being takes birth is influenced by the different modes of birth and habitual tendencies. Accordingly, all [the various methods of] the creation phase apply equally to all four modes of birth in terms of serving as means for purifying them. However, owing to the similarity in aspect [of a particular method] to one or the other of the four modes of birth, realized masters have explained each individually.

The purificatory method that accords in aspects with birth from a womb entails [the steps of] the manifestation [as the resultant vajra-holder] due to urging the molten form with songs and the emanation of the mandala [of the retinue] from the space [of the consort's womb].

The purificatory method that accords in aspects with egg birth is the creation method in four vajra steps, [which entails] the moon and sun [seat], seed-syllable, insignia, and the merging.

The purificatory method that accords in aspects with birth from heat and moisture is creation by means of just the moon and seed-syllable; or creation by the three vajra rites [of seed-syllable, insignia, deity].

The purificatory method that accords in aspects with miraculous birth is the creation of the full form all at once, completed instantaneously by means of thought.

All of those methods are applied within a single visualization sequence. Moreover, it is asserted that [the creation of] the deities of the eye-consecration, and so forth, accords with the miraculous mode of birth; the creation by means of five awakenings, with birth from heat and moisture; emanating from the space [of the consort's womb], with birth from a womb; and the arising [of the deities] from vital-essence spheres [of light], with egg birth. However, I have not researched the source of this explanation.

Creation by the five actual awakenings accords with the stages in the human womb, and so forth;

The pledge-being, with the coarse body; the pristine-awareness being, with the refined essences of channels, and so on;

The contemplation-being accords with the subtle innate body; and consecration

Of the sense fields and the three places, with the experience of sensory objects

When the potencies of the sense powers and the three faculties have strengthened.

Next [are explained] the purificatory means [that accord with the human birth] specifically:

In the context of a method such as creation by means of the five actual awakenings, whereby the resultant vajra-holder manifests, the step of visualization of the seed-syllable (*hum* or another syllable) purifies the five stages in the human womb.¹⁴

In the system that entails the visualization of the five-pointed vajra, the set of five lower prongs purifies the development of the five limbs (i.e., four limbs and trunk) [of the body], and the set of five upper prongs purifies the five fingers on each hand and five toes on each foot, and the head's eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body's [tactile] component.

Moreover, the visualization of the form of the deity through the steps of the seed-syllable, the insignia arising from the seed-syllable, and so forth, accords in features with and purifies the habitual tendencies related to the formation of the body through the stages of the fish[-like] form, the arising of limbs [in the turtle-like form], and so on.¹⁵

The pledge-being accords in features with and purifies the habitual tendencies related to a person's coarse temporal body,¹⁶ composed of elements and the evolutes of elements.¹⁷

The pristine-awareness being accords in features with and purifies the habitual tendencies related to the most refined essences of the channels, winds, and vital essences of that body.

The contemplation-being accords in features with and purifies the habitual tendencies related to the innate body, the subtle body of just wind and mind.

The consecration of the sense fields and the three places [i.e., forehead, throat, and heart] [accords in features with and purifies the habitual tendencies related to] the capacity to experience sense objects, which is acquired through the gradual growth and strengthening of the potencies of the sense powers and the faculties of body, speech, and mind.

Emanation of the deities in the supremely victorious mandala [i.e., the deities of the retinue] [accords in features with and purifies the habitual tendencies related to] a person's procreation of offspring.

THE COMPLETING METHODS AND THEIR SYMBOLISM [b']

**The drawing in of the pristine-awareness deities symbolizes
discernment of details;
Conferral of initiation and sealing symbolize being in one's own
family;
Offering and praise, the enjoyment of the five types of sensory
objects;
Recitation symbolizes conversation; other steps, the
corresponding activities;
And dissolution and re-emergence symbolize death and taking
rebirth.**

Evident ways that the completing methods correspond to, and accord in features with, their bases of purification are not found to any great extent in the tantric texts. However, according to masters of the past, each of the [completing] steps [of the creation phase] accords in features with a particular [object of purification] and thereby serves as its purificatory means:

The [step of] drawing in the pristine-awareness deities symbolizes the

discernment of details of perceived objects. In an alternative interpretation, this step symbolizes the active consciousnesses, after having emerged from the ground-of-all [consciousness] and having drawn in their external objects, returning to that ground.

The conferral of initiation symbolizes a newborn infant being washed and [then beginning] to act on its own.

The sealing symbolizes [the child] being in the status of its own family.

The offering symbolizes the experience of pleasure as desire and craving for sensory experiences develop.

The praise symbolizes being spoken of with approval by other persons if one possesses qualities appreciated in society.

In short, those [steps] symbolize experience and enjoyment of the five [types of] sensory objects.

The recitation [of mantra] symbolizes ordinary breathing and conversation based on confused notions.

[The yogas related to] eating, conduct, and passion symbolize each of those activities, respectively.

The dissolution [of the mandala] and [re-]emergence [as the deity] symbolize the end of the life of an ordinary person, the stages of death and entering luminous clarity; and then, after that luminous clarity, re-emerging, on the basis of just wind and mind, as the mental body of the intermediate state and taking rebirth.

HOW THE PURIFICATORY MEANS CORRESPOND TO THE RESULTS OF PURIFICATION [gg]

As to the results of purification, the celestial palace, and so forth,
correspond

To the place of awakening; creation by methods, to the manner
of awakening;

Offering, praise, recitation, and so forth, to awakened activities
and deeds.

When the visualization sequence has been carried out in that way, the results of the process of purification [are attained]. [The creation-phase steps correspond to the results as follows]:

The celestial palace and [related steps] accord in features with the place where one attains enlightenment.

The creation [of the deity] by means of the five awakenings, or other creation methods,¹⁸ accords in features with the manner of [attaining] enlightenment.

Offering, praise, recitation, dissolution of the mandala, post-meditation activity, and so forth, accord in features with deeds and activities performed once enlightenment is attained.

Thus, the results are used as the path itself.

Moreover, of the three dimensions, the creation phase possesses the entire range

Of the vast and special attributes of the manifest dimension.

Thus, looking up,

The creation phase accords with the likeness of awakening; and looking down,

It accords with the likeness of cyclic life: so declared the seers of the sublime.

Moreover, [the steps of the phase of creation] correspond—being similar in aspects—to the natures of the three dimensions of awakening, namely, the dimension of reality, the enjoyment dimension, and the manifest dimension.¹⁹ Of those three dimensions, however, the creation phase in itself, owing to its being a yoga based on imagination, possesses the entire range of the vast and special attributes of the visible form of the manifest dimension of awakening. Its steps correspond to the place, manner [of awakening], and deeds, as mentioned above; as well, to the acts done for the welfare of others after having received initiation from all the buddhas of the universe; the revealing of teachings to the pure retinue; appearing to impure trainees as if to pass away into perfect peace; and working unceasingly for the benefit of beings by means of emanations. Seers of the sublime have aptly described [the creation phase] in these words:

Thus, looking up, it accords with the likeness of awakening;

Looking down, it accords with the likeness of cyclic life.²⁰

The main steps of the visualization sequence accord with the essential nature of the basis and therefore enable one to purify it. Being in accordance with the essential nature of the result, they enable one to see the result. On this point, the Venerable Jonang [Taranatha] states:

What others call “basis of purification” is, in our tradition, termed “object to be purified.” This is because the basis that effects the purification cannot be conceived of as other than original reality.

While there are different points of view on this subject, to understand this remark of Taranatha is of crucial importance.

HOW CREATION-PHASE METHODS ACT AS RIPENING AGENTS FOR THE COMPLETION PHASE [hh]

**The creation-phase contemplations, once a special connection has developed,
Act as ripening agents for the arising of the realization of the completion phase.**

When creation[-phase] contemplation is carried out in accordance with the tantras and immersed in with yearning, due to the relationship [to that contemplation] there unfailingly develops a special connection associated with body and mind. [As a result,] the creation-phase [steps] act as ripening agents for the arising of realization in the completion phase.

To explain, the different creation methods and completion methods set forth in the individual tantras act as ripening agents to bring about particular [attainments]. While it is not possible to expand on the details of this topic, [the following presentation] according to the Arya [Nagarjuna] tradition of the Guhyasamaja tantra can serve as an example:

The way to purify²¹ the death process, imagining that [the universe and oneself] dissolve into luminous clarity, is a method that acts as the ripening agent principally [for the attainment of] the stage of luminous clarity. Therefore, being extremely similar in aspect to the luminous clarity [of the stage] of mind isolation, [that method] also acts as the ripening agent [for the luminous clarity of mind isolation]. As well, it will act as the ripening agent in general for all aspects of luminous clarity found in the phase of completion.²²

The five actual awakenings that use the intermediate state as the path for [the attainment of] the enjoyment dimension of awakening [entail] modes of emergence from luminous clarity. The modes of emergence [are experienced] from the stage of mind isolation, when one emerges from

the final-example luminous clarity²³ through the three [stages of] light occurring in the forward order, up to the fourth stage, when one emerges from the ultimate true luminous clarity through the three [stages of] light occurring in the reverse order. These are symbolized by the [visualization of] the sun, moon, and lotus.

The visualization of the three syllables [*om*, *ah*, *hum*] above [the sun, moon, and lotus] and their merging [into one] symbolizes the merging of the three [stages of] light with the wind of luminous clarity due to which the third-stage illusory body and the body of union are attained, and once attained, continuously manifest.²⁴

Awakening by means of the seed-syllable symbolizes the awakened speech of that state of union, ineffable yet inclusive of all aspects of speech; and awakening by means of the insignia symbolizes the awakened mind of the state of union, [inseparable] bliss and emptiness, the awareness of all knowables, that which overcomes all obscurations.

Light emanated and then withdrawn symbolizes the activity of awakened body, speech, and mind.

Awakening by means of the full manifestation of the [deity's] form symbolizes the attainment of the true sameness [of one's being and] awakened body, speech, and mind, or a similitude of that sameness.

The above simply provides examples. There are also correspondences to the form of the deity that arises from inseparable bliss and emptiness [induced by] the subtle and vital-essence [*yogas*] during the stage of body isolation; as well as to the bliss and emptiness and the form of the deity [experienced] by yogins abiding in the stage of voice isolation, the stage of mind isolation, and the stage of the illusory body.

The practice that uses birth as the path [for the attainment] of the manifest dimension of awakening is to become the manifest dimension, *Vajrasattva*, through having immersed oneself in the bliss of the union of all transcendent ones. This symbolizes one's continuous immersion in bliss and emptiness throughout all one's experiences [even] when one has emerged from the bliss and emptiness of completion-phase equipoise. Some maintain that this symbolizes entrance into the coarse body, which is a similitude of the illusory body [attained] during the three isolations [body, voice, and mind] and the form of the deity [made] of wind and mind [that is attained] on the third stage. In any case, to remain immersed, throughout all one's experiences, in bliss represents the principal way of using [birth] as the path [for the attainment of] the manifest dimension

in the context of the completion phase. The other [methods of using birth as the path] are simply variations.

Meditation on the body mandala acts as the ripening agent so that the impure aspects of the aggregates and elements dissolve into luminous clarity and the most refined aspects emanate as the form of the deity.

The consecration of the awakened body, voice, and mind is to lay the foundation for generating the special pristine awareness of the three [stages of] light, beginning at the stage of body isolation up to the state of union.

Visualization of the placement of the three beings acts as the ripening agent so that the most refined aspects of the channels, vital essences, winds, and mind manifest as the form of the deity.

Sealing and conferral of initiation act as ripening agents so that, by fixing bodhichitta at the head, the aggregates and elements all manifest as great bliss.

Gathering awareness females and the act of passion is to lay the foundation for all aspects of the phase of completion [involving] an action seal.

Emanating the supremely victorious mandala [i.e., the retinue] is what accords with the arising of the mandala of the pure and impure illusory bodies from the ultimate factor of yoga with the action seal and the pristine-awareness seal.²⁵

The subtle and vital-essence [yogas] serve as causes for [the attainment of] body isolation and accord in aspects with [the stage of] body isolation itself.

Recitation [of the mantra] acts as the ripening agent for [the stage of] voice isolation.

Entering luminous clarity, the principal [method], acts as the ripening agent for mind isolation.

Urging [with songs] and the [re-]emergence, along with offering and praise, act as ripening agents for the illusory body of equipoise and the illusory body of post[-meditation] attainment.

While the above discussion is representative [of tantras in general], one should learn the secret practices that act as ripening agents for the completion-phase [practices] specific to the Chakrasamvara, Hevajra, Kalachakra, and so forth.

6. THE PHASE OF COMPLETION

- 2. Meditation in the Phase of Completion [II.B.2]
 - a. General Points
 - b. Identification of the Root [of the Path]
 - i. An Overview
 - ii. Individual Discussions [on Emptiness and Compassion]
 - aa. Emptiness
 - bb. Compassion
-

[This chapter begins the presentation of] part two of the subject of meditation in the two phases: meditation in the phase of completion. This section is set forth in four parts: [one,] a discussion of general points; [two,] identification of the root [of the path]; [three,] an exposition of the completion phase divided into branches; and [four,] the essential key elements that epitomize the completion phase. [Of these four parts, the first two are treated in this chapter.]

GENERAL POINTS [a]

**The completion phase itself comprises the three, ground, path,
and result,**

**Each having the characteristics of innateness, nonconceptuality,
and totality.**

**The ground has two innateness aspects, the nature and the bliss
from melting.**

**By contemplating the ground, it is made manifest at the time of
the result.**

As stated [in the root text,] the phase of completion must be presented in terms of the three [contexts] of ground, path, and result.¹ Each of the three has three [primary] characteristics, as stated in [Pundarika's] *Stainless Light*:²

The completion phase is innateness, nonconceptuality, and the totality of all aspects, free from the concepts of faces, arms, colors, and shapes.

This means that the three [primary] characteristics—known as “innateness,” “nonconceptuality,” and “the totality of all aspects”—must all be present.

The first characteristic, innateness, cuts through [states] in which appearances and awareness have greatly declined, as though unconscious, and cuts through the meditative concentration of cessation,³ and so forth.

The second, nonconceptuality, cuts through partial [approaches] involving conceptual thoughts, such as the creation phase.

The third, the totality of all aspects, cuts through the meditative concentration of a mere awareness devoid of appearances, which is just a partial representation of pristine awareness.

[To turn] for a moment to those three characteristics in terms of the ground, [the first,] innateness, is of two kinds: innateness as the bliss from the melting [of vital essence]; and innateness as the nature [of reality]. Of the two, the innateness that is the bliss from melting refers to the four joys⁴ during sexual union. It is as described in the *Essence of the Great Seal*:⁵

Then, there is the innateness that is
The creation of indestructible bliss:
That itself is Bhagavati Prajna[paramita]
And is an aspect of the completion phase.

The innateness that is the nature [of reality] is defined in the *Hevajra Tantra*:⁶

What is called the innateness of the nature
Is the single binding together of all aspects.

What is meant here is [the state of] Vajrasattva that has no beginning and

no end. It exists as all animate and inanimate phenomena and throughout all time. Thus, it is termed “innateness.” [This characteristic of] innateness in itself bears the characteristic of nonconceptuality, [the second characteristic of the ground]. [These points] are stated in [Indrabhūti’s] *Innately Existent*.⁷ [The third characteristic,] known as the totality of all aspects, means that which encompasses the body and all phenomenal things. The *Hevajra Tantra* states:⁸

It is what pervades all things....

Although [the ground] exists within the body phenomenon, it did not arise anew from it. There is a relationship between the support [the body] and what is supported [the ground].⁹ Consequently, [the ground] can be made manifest on the basis of the body composed of the six elements.¹⁰

This phase of completion of the ground should be known by the many different references to it, such as union,¹¹ vajra yoga,¹² and the inseparability of emptiness and compassion. The ground-completion phase itself is what is cultivated as the completion phase of the path. Consequently, at the time of the result as well, it is solely this ground-completion phase that is made manifest.

To summarize, innate great bliss, nonconceptuality, natural pristine awareness, and so forth, are what connect the stages: they are the same at the path [stage] as they are at the ground [stage]; and they are the same at the stage of the arising of the result as they are on the path.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE ROOT [OF THE PATH] [b]

This section has two parts: an overview; and individual discussions [on emptiness and compassion].

AN OVERVIEW [i]

The root of the path is the union of emptiness and compassion.

From the general perspective of the universal way (*mahayana*), the root of the path is that which is called “the bodhichitta of the emptiness that has compassion as its essence.”¹³ That bodhichitta is widely known.

However, it should be understood that in the unsurpassable ripening

and liberating paths of the indestructible way in particular, and in this context of the completion phase, it is a bodhichitta that is the inseparability of uncommon emptiness and great compassion—the ultimate object to be known, the ultimate object of meditation, and the ultimate result.

Of those [bodhichittas], the one to be understood in terms of the ground is as described in the *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra*:¹⁴

Beginningless, endless peace; the sovereign
Wherein the phenomenal and noumenal have ceased;
The inseparability of emptiness and compassion:
That is referred to by the term “bodhichitta.”¹⁵

Similar statements appear in numerous scriptural sources.

The bodhichitta in the context of the path is described in the *Brief Presentation of the [Kalachakra] Initiation*:¹⁶

Emptiness, the image, the apprehended, the cause;
Compassion, the unchanging, the apprehender, the result:
The inseparability of emptiness and compassion
Is the bodhichitta that is not emitted.¹⁷

There are many such teachings.

The bodhichitta at the time of the result is as stated in [Pundarika’s] *Stainless Light*:¹⁸

The emptiness that has the nature of compassion....

And:¹⁹

As for compassion and emptiness, it is explained that
“Time” (*kala*) means the relative, that which has form;
And the term “wheel” (*chakra*) refers to emptiness;
“Wheel of time” (*kalachakra*) means their inseparability.²⁰

There are numerous similar citations. Hence, these points [concerning uncommon emptiness and compassion] represent the essence of all the teachings of the sutras and tantras in general and the essence of the unsur-

passable completion phase of secret mantra in particular. Therefore, [this bodhichitta is] the ultimate essential purpose of the highest yoga tantras such as Kalachakra, the meaning of *évam*, and the root of the eighty-four thousand aspects of the teachings.²¹ Moreover, what is called “Vajrasattva Kalachakra” has the characteristic qualities of the union of emptiness and compassion. Thus, all the precious tantras clearly state that [this union] is the essence of their teachings.

The way in which that [union of emptiness and compassion] itself can serve as the root of the path [is explained as follows]: In the general system of the universal way, it is maintained that, by means of these [emptiness and compassion], the extremes of existence and peace are overcome.²² Likewise, in this [context of the] completion phase, uncommon emptiness and compassion should be considered the means to overcome the two extremes of existence and peace, respectively.

As to the ways uncommon emptiness and compassion eliminate the two extremes, emptiness cuts through the elaborations of conceptual grasping; compassion [ensures] that the welfare of sentient beings is never abandoned. In this context [of the completion phase], compassion is referred to by the word “desire,” in which case desire should be taken to mean the desire that is uncommon great bliss, the great compassion that is the method of the completion phase. Moreover, it should be said that great bliss itself will overcome the extreme of peace. Since that great bliss has an aspect of desire for sentient beings, [the word “desire”] is used to refer to great compassion, the method. This is important to understand and represents a distinguishing feature [of the completion phase].

That being so, the inseparability of emptiness and compassion itself is called the “vajra yoga of the union of method and wisdom” and is present throughout [the stages of] the ground, path, and result. Of those [stages,] it is taught that during the time of the path, the pristine awareness of great bliss is inconceivably powerful—even more so than the ultimate truth [of emptiness]—in purifying the habitual tendencies of desire and the other emotional afflictions. To explain, first emptiness effects purification, and then great bliss arises from that emptiness. That bliss has the capacity to purify every single habitual tendency. Therefore, one should understand the statement that of the two—emptiness and bliss—emptiness is the root of the purificatory agent, while great bliss is the principal purificatory agent.

INDIVIDUAL DISCUSSIONS [ON EMPTINESS AND COMPASSION] [ii]

This section has two parts: a discussion on emptiness; and one on compassion.

EMPTINESS [aa]

**Emptiness means the emptiness endowed with the supreme
of all aspects.**

It is essential to know what is meant by emptiness and compassion [in this context]. Therefore, each will be described briefly.

Many different types of emptiness are delineated in the way of characteristics.²³ Apart from those, there are many types of emptiness taught in the superior system of mantra. In the first three sets of tantra, [action, conduct, and yoga], emptiness is taught in conjunction with the sixteen Sanskrit vowels²⁴ and the sixteen emptiness-beings. Sixteen types of emptiness—the inner emptiness, outer emptiness, and so forth²⁵—are taught in the *Indestructible Garland Tantra*.²⁶ Fourteen or, alternatively, sixteen emptinesses, such as the emptiness of that which eats and the emptiness of that which is eaten, are taught in the *Samputa Tantra*.²⁷ Eight emptinesses, the emptiness of looking at form, and so forth, are taught in the *Continuation of the Abhidhana Tantra*.²⁸ It is, however, the emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects, taught in the uncommon *Kalachakra: King of Tantras*, that represents the final view of all tantras.

In general, the uncommon emptiness of the completion phase may be differentiated [in various ways]. When differentiated according to the ways it manifests, it is classified in terms of light,²⁹ increase of light, culmination of light, and luminous clarity. In reference to those, the *Indestructible Garland Tantra*, for example, speaks of four emptinesses:³⁰

The empty, the very empty,
The third, the great empty,
And the fourth, the all-empty:
These are distinctions of cause and result.³¹

As another example, the *Primordial Buddha* [*Kalachakra Tantra*]³² teaches ten forms of emptiness, the signs of day and signs of night:

Smoke, mirage, fireflies,
Lamp, blazing, moon, sun,
Rahu, lightning, and great sphere.³³

The uncommon emptiness can also be differentiated in terms of phases. For example, in the second summary in [*Kalachakra Tantra's*] chapter on world-systems, there is a classification of the “sixteen emptinesses” that refer to the sixteen phases that are the elements of the sixteen parts of the dark side [waning moon]. These sixteen can be grouped into three categories, or four, when the all-aspects emptiness is included.³⁴

Moreover, emptiness is differentiated according to categories of meanings. There are five and six emptinesses when it is divided into conceptual categories: “the five immutable great emptinesses,” which refer to the aspect of freedom from the obscurations of the five aggregates, the five elements, and so forth; and “the six immutable empty essences,” the aspect of freedom from the obscurations of the six sense powers, their six objects, and so forth.³⁵

Although there are these various differentiations, all types of emptiness can be included in three emptinesses: the emptiness to be ascertained; the emptiness that is contemplated on the path; and the emptiness that is the ultimate result.

The first, the emptiness to be ascertained, is so called because in this context [of the completion phase], [this emptiness] should be ascertained as simply an object to be understood as a general category but need not be an object to be meditated upon. The type of emptiness spoken of in the way of characteristics would be an example [of this emptiness].

The second is the emptiness that is contemplated on the path. In this context, what is principally meant by this is not the emptiness based on analysis, such as the two [types of] no-self.³⁶ The actual meaning in this context is what is referred to as “unconceived emptiness,”³⁷ the all-aspects emptiness, for example. Unconceived emptiness is of two types: emptiness in which appearance and emptiness are not distinguished; and emptiness in which appearance and emptiness are distinguished. The first of those, emptiness in which appearance and emptiness are not distinguished,

comprises two aspects: definite emptiness; and indefinite emptiness. The term “definite emptiness” is used to refer to emptinesses such as the four emptinesses³⁸ and the ten emptinesses (the first of which is smoke).³⁹ Those are considered definite because they have definite [aspects] that can be identified as manifesting as particular kinds of forms. The term “indefinite emptiness” is used to refer to emptinesses such as empty form endowed with all aspects. They are referred to in this way:

The universal image that is luminous clarity.⁴⁰

They are considered indefinite because they have [all] the aspects of the three realms and the three times, and therefore are indefinite in their modes of manifestation.

The third, the emptiness of the ultimate result, includes emptinesses such as the five immutable great emptinesses and the six immutable empty essences. When these [five and six] are differentiated [as two separate sets, this emptiness] is considered to be what is symbolized by the syllable *é* [the second set]. If they are not differentiated, the *é*-and-*vam* union is also referred to by the term “emptiness.” Hence, all of the five immutable emptinesses and six immutable empty essences are considered to be what is represented by the term “emptiness [of the ultimate result].”⁴¹

That being said, the principal emptiness to be contemplated in the completion phase should be understood as follows: The *Guhyasamaja Tantra* teaches the causal three [stages of] light and the resultant luminous clarity,⁴² the last of which [is the emptiness to be contemplated]. The *Kalachakra Tantra* teaches the causal ten signs⁴³ and the [resultant] eleventh sign, the universal image,⁴⁴ the last of which [is to be contemplated]. That is because only the emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects is the uncommon emptiness that is capable of giving rise to supreme unchanging bliss.⁴⁵

This essential emptiness is of a nature endowed with all aspects of the three realms, unconceived appearances that are like magical images reflected in a divination mirror,⁴⁶ while its own nature has no inherent reality, being devoid of atomic structure, and is totally free from conceptions. It is the source of great bliss, the illusory creation of the supreme pristine awareness that is luminous clarity, direct knowing. Hence, this emptiness is characterized as the “abode of great bliss”; that is to say, when focused on

and familiarized with, it has the power to give rise to the pristine awareness of great bliss. This emptiness is therefore the source of that [great bliss].

[In the *Kalachakra Tantra*,] there are many references to the cause-and-result relationship between this emptiness and great bliss, as in the following:

Emptiness, the image, the apprehended, the cause;⁴⁷

Moreover, in the introductory remarks [section of the *Kalachakra Tantra*,]⁴⁸ this emptiness is explained by means of terms such as “syllable *é*,” “vagina (*bhaga*),” and “source of phenomena”;⁴⁹ and bliss, by means of terms such as “syllable *vam*,” “holder of the vajra,” and “phenomenon.” However, one needs to understand that these [emptiness and bliss] are of an uncommon relationship, by virtue of being the union of the support [emptiness] and what is supported [bliss]. This profound point is valued as one of supreme [importance].

This empty form endowed with the supreme of all aspects is of the essential nature of inseparable emptiness and compassion. Familiarization with it is known as “vajra yoga.” Hence, this emptiness, by virtue of being the emptiness of a union [with compassion (bliss)], should be understood to be the supreme central path.⁵⁰ Knowing how [this emptiness] is presented as the ultimate truth [divided] into types, one should understand that terms such as “source of phenomena” and “mother of the buddhas”—[when used] to propound [this emptiness] as the ultimate view of the definitive meaning, as the source of the strengths⁵¹ and other [qualities of buddhas], and as the abode of great bliss—denote all that pertains to uncommon wisdom. In view of that, [the *Kalachakra Tantra*] uses such expressions as this:

Supreme mother of buddhas....

This emptiness should therefore be understood to be the path of the fourth initiation as well.⁵² Thus, there are citations such as this:

The initiation that resembles the stainless moon....

Nevertheless, one might wonder, “Whether or not the dimension endowed with the supreme of all aspects can manifest as the pristine

awareness of great bliss, in any case, isn't that pristine awareness—which is free from all conceptual elaborations of apprehender and apprehended—merely the cessation of all dualistic experience, and therefore an emptiness devoid of any perceivable appearance?" However, that is not so. That freedom from elaborations in itself is what arises as the circle [of deities] of the mandala, and so forth, everything in cyclic existence and [the state of] liberation, having [all] aspects of the three realms. Moreover, that manifestation is not a relative appearance, karmic appearance, or delusory appearance, but is a manifestation of pristine awareness, a manifestation of reality itself, a manifestation of the primordial nature.

That being said, this manifestation accords in aspects with forms, sounds, and so on. There may therefore arise the notion that this is a phenomenon composed of atoms. In consideration of that, [the *Kalachakra Tantra*] repeatedly mentions that [this manifestation] is devoid of atomic structure. There are, however, some who say that what is called emptiness here is not the true ultimate emptiness but is instead an emptiness that is the absence of phenomena composed of atoms. That talk [indicates] a distorted view with regard to the profound meaning.

This all-aspects emptiness is spoken of by the name "emptiness that has a point of reference." Having a point of reference does not mean that it is attended by elaborations, designations, concepts, or efforts. "Point of reference" means what is actually seen and experienced and therefore what manifests directly to undeluded pristine awareness. This is the true emptiness that is the ultimate dimension of phenomena. Thus, it represents ultimate truth as it is generally known.

COMPASSION [bb]

Compassion means the uncommon bliss, which does not change.

The compassion being discussed [here in the context of the completion phase] is significantly different from ordinary compassion and great compassion, as well that termed "awakened compassion,"⁵³ as generally spoken of in the common ways [to realization]. In addition, in this mantra way, there is a threefold distinction, set forth in [Vitapada's] *Sevenfold Yoga*,⁵⁴ in terms of [levels of] individuals: the compassion of a beginner; the compassion of a bodhisattva who has achieved a stage of realization; and the compassion of a buddha. When taught from a general perspective, those

are called “compassion alone,” comparable to calling the common emptiness “emptiness alone.”

What is meant is that, unlike the compassion of union [with emptiness], this common compassion by itself—even if one had cultivated it continuously for the entirety of an eon—would not enable one to cross over cyclic existence. Compassion alone therefore falls to the side of eternalism and hence is termed “eternalism alone.” Accordingly, Saraha states:⁵⁵

One may have thoroughly familiarized with compassion alone
But still remain in this cycle, without transcending suffering.⁵⁶

That being the case, in a context such as the completion phase, which is based on the swift path of mantra, what is called the “compassion that is the root of method” should not be taken to mean compassion alone. The root-of-method compassion is considered to be primarily what is known as the “compassion of union [with emptiness].” This union-compassion should be applied as yoga in the path of uncommon emptiness whose essence is compassion.

The actual basis of the characteristics of that compassion of union is the uncommon changeless great bliss; that is to say, the self-cognizant dimension of ineffable great-bliss pristine awareness, which is the ultimate dimension of phenomena, unchanging by nature, united as a single essence with the unemitted vital-essence support.

This great bliss overcomes the suffering of oneself and others. It is therefore great compassion, since to fully protect all suffering beings is the characteristic [that defines] great compassion.

Although that is so, [bliss is taught as compassion] not because it simply fits the etymology of the word “compassion” but because [bliss] manifests with an aspect, or mode of apprehension, of supremely great love for all beings without exception. Great bliss has no point of reference since all dualistic experience has ceased and the seal of the ineffable is never transcended. Thus, it is called “compassion without a point of reference.” Moreover, even the bliss [experienced with] an action seal⁵⁷ is a manifestation of compassion. As it is said:

To offer everything as a cause for awakening through the method of the wisdom [seal] is to possess a mind endowed with the compassion of a king or minister.⁵⁸

Thus, there are three compassions: the bliss of the action seal, which has sentient beings as its point of reference; the bliss of the pristine-awareness seal, with phenomena as its point of reference; and the bliss of the great seal, with no point of reference.⁵⁹

[In tantras other than Kalachakra,] great bliss is considered to be relative. That great bliss is not actually relative, but it must be realized by relying on the method of bliss from the melting of the relative [vital essence]. It is therefore considered relative owing to its connection to the relative.

In this context—that of the uncommon system of Kalachakra—changeless great bliss is designated as ultimate truth since such bliss is distinguished by the disappearance of conceptual elaborations related to apprehender and apprehended, and so forth. The great seal of empty form endowed with the supreme of all aspects is designated⁶⁰ as relative truth since, in terms of its aspects being consistent with those of relative [phenomena], it exists as the true nature of every single relative phenomenon.

In fact, the unchanging bliss and [the emptiness] endowed with the supreme of all aspects are one in nature. Therefore, unchanging bliss itself, being the very nature of all phenomena, is without change. In terms of being bliss, it exists in its own right purely as ultimate [truth]. In terms of its manifesting as the totality of all aspects, that great bliss itself is the intrinsic nature or true reality of all relative phenomena. Its being the totality of all aspects is therefore considered relative truth. That said, this explanation has been given in order that through it one may come to such understanding.

This [“compassion”] is also named “the union of cause and result.” Although there is no true cause (as the producer) and result (as the produced), the ultimate dimension of phenomena that is the nature of all causes is the empty form [endowed with the supreme of all aspects], and the ultimate dimension of all results is unchanging bliss. From emptiness—as a function of its very nature—arises bliss. Therefore, emptiness resembles a cause; bliss, a result. There are no differentiations to be made in terms of the essential natures [of empty form and great bliss]. However, as to the way the yogin achieves realization, the first five branches of the [sixfold] yoga⁶¹ [bring about] realization of the characteristics of the totality of all aspects but not the realization based on unchanging bliss. From [the branch of] contemplation onwards, that bliss is also realized. Thus, the path of realization of great bliss arises from the path of realization of just emptiness itself. The agent of realization, the pristine awareness of the

path, therefore acts as both cause and result. Hence, that which is realized, the ultimate dimension of phenomena, is also designated as both cause and result.⁶²

That being so, the actual union at the time of the path arises from the branch of contemplation. This union, which is the merging into one of knower and knowable, should be understood as the inseparable union of emptiness and compassion. Accordingly, the term “knowable” means the mind that is apprehended, in other words, the emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects: wisdom. The “knower” is the apprehending mind, that is, supreme changeless great bliss: method. The seeing of the appearance of such a knowable precedes such a knower, which arises after. The knowable is therefore called “cause,” and the knower, “result.” In this [contemplation] branch, this cause and result “seal” each other by being inseparably merged and hence are termed “union.”

In summary, the nature of reality at the ground stage is that of the essence of that union. Hence, the resultant pristine awareness also has the essential nature of the union. Therefore, the path or method one applies in order to realize that [pristine awareness] must also have the characteristic [quality] of the union. This is because it is the natural [law] of all things that a particular cause will give rise to a corresponding result.

That union, as just explained, is the essential nature of the union of the pristine awareness that is unchanging great bliss and the emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects. It is also the union of great compassion and emptiness. Even the union of the illusory body and luminous clarity is simply this union alone. Accordingly, the *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* states:⁶³

Yoga will not be achieved by the body
Of method alone, nor by wisdom alone.
The Transcendent One taught yoga
As the union of method and wisdom.

“Great compassion,” “luminous clarity,”⁶⁴ and “unchanging bliss” are identical in meaning. Moreover, these are explained as being the method, or relative truth as it is generally known. “Emptiness,” “the illusory body,” and “the dimension [of emptiness] endowed with the supreme of all aspects” are identical in meaning. These are considered to be wisdom, or ultimate truth as it is generally known.

7. FATHER TANTRA SYSTEMS: GUHYASAMAJA, BLACK YAMARI, AND RED YAMARI

- c. Branches of the Completion Phase [II.B.2.c]
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 - aa. The Guhyasamaja Completion Phase
 - 1' The Arya [Nagarjuna] Tradition
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[This chapter is a continuation of the subject of completion-phase meditation. Presented now is] part three: the completion phase divided into branches. This discussion comprises three sections: [one,] completion-phase systems in highest yoga father tantras; [two,] completion-phase systems in highest yoga mother tantras; and [three,] an encapsulation of

those systems. [The first section, completion-phase systems in highest yoga father tantras, is treated in this chapter.]

COMPLETION-PHASE SYSTEMS IN HIGHEST YOGA FATHER TANTRAS [i]

This discussion is presented in three parts: the completion phase in Guhyasamaja; the completion phase in Red Yamari; and the completion phase in Black Yamari.

THE GUHYASAMAJA COMPLETION PHASE [aa]

This section has two parts: the tradition of Arya [Nagarjuna]; and the tradition of Jnanapada.¹

THE ARYA [NAGARJUNA] TRADITION [1']

There are various formulations of the completion-phase branches.

The *Guhyasamaja Root Tantra* teaches six stages: body isolation, Voice isolation, mind isolation, illusory body, luminous clarity, and union.

The first can be included in either the creation phase or vajra recitation,

So that all stages are included in the widely known five stages, namely,

Vajra recitation, focus on mind, self-consecration, actual awakening, and union.

This five-stage formulation is that of the tradition of Arya Nagarjuna.

The branches of the completion phase are very numerous. [Some are] explicitly set forth in the highest yoga tantras; [others,] formulated by individual accomplished masters. What follows now, however, is a discussion of simply the essence of the principal and widely known sets [of branches].

In the sixteenth chapter of the *Guhyasamaja Root Tantra*, a father tantra,² it is said:

Through definite understanding of mantra, the voice
 Cultivated through the body invokes the mind
 So that the goals to be realized—the most supreme,
 The power, gladness, and contentment—are met.

The meaning of this verse is as follows: “Through definite understanding of mantra” [arises] voice isolation. “Through the body” means what [tantras] call “the emanation body,” which cultivates vajra recitation; that is, body isolation. The isolation of “voice” cultivated by that [body isolation] “invokes the mind,” in the sense of making it its object. “Mind” is the Vajrasattva present in one’s heart. By means of that, the four [stages] such as “the most supreme” are “the goals to be realized” in the yogin’s mind. This “most supreme” [stage] is mind isolation, perfectly attained through vajra recitation. “The power” means self-consecration [i.e., the illusory body]. “Gladness” refers to luminous clarity, the ultimate truth, which purifies that illusory body. “Contentment” means the dimension of Great Vajradhara, the state of union.³ This explanation is given in [Chandrakirti’s] *Illuminating Lamp*,⁴ which distinguishes six stages [in the completion phase]. [Aryadeva’s] [*Lamp*] *Summary of Tantric Practice*⁵ sets forth the completion phase in the same way.

Arya Nagarjuna formulated the completion phase in five stages, the first of which is vajra recitation. This system follows what is taught in the last chapter of the *Indestructible Garland*, an explanatory tantra [of Guhyasamaja]:⁶

By means of proficiency in vajra recitation
 The characteristics of winds are understood.

Then the winds of thoughts are stopped,
 And the focus on mind is thereby attained.

By means of the stage of self-consecration,
 The eight powers⁷ are gained.

Knowing the distinctions of light, and so forth,
 The stage of actual awakening is attained.

To abide in the stage of union
 Having gained all powers:
 This is accomplished in this very life.

Since the first [of the six stages], body isolation, can be included in either the creation phase or vajra recitation, the presentation of the completion phase in five stages is widely known. The five stages [as distinguished in the above citation] are taught as follows: [first,] the stage of vajra recitation, or voice isolation; [second,] the stage of focus on the mind, or [isolation of] mind; [third,] the stage of self-consecration, or the relative-truth illusory body; [fourth,] the stage of actual awakening, or the ultimate-truth luminous clarity; and [fifth,] the stage of nondual pristine awareness, or the union of the two truths.⁸ [These are] delineated in [Nagarjuna's] *Five Stages*:⁹

Gradually, by means of the principle of winds,
[The yogin] fathoms the principle of mantra.
With understanding of the focus on mantra,
He trains in the vajra-recitation [techniques].

Abiding in [the practice of] vajra recitation,
The yogin comes to attain the focus on mind.

Abiding in the illusion-like contemplation,
He will gain mastery through the true limit.

When he has emerged from that true limit,¹⁰
He will attain nondual pristine awareness.

Abiding in the contemplation of union,
He will have nothing more to learn.¹¹

These five are the same as the five essential principles taught in [Aryadeva's] *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice*.¹²

From another perspective, the stage of vajra recitation is merely a preliminary for the mind-focus [stage], while it is the focus on mind that is the true causal completion phase.¹³ The four stages of the completion phase (when vajra recitation is considered part of the [mind-focus] branch) plus the creation phase (as the first stage) constitute the five stages of the combination of the creation and completion phases. [This way of differentiating the five stages] is taught in Chandrakirti's *Illuminating Lamp*:¹⁴

Accomplishment of the secret-mantra body
Is the phase of creation, the first stage.

The focus on the mind alone
Is said to be the second stage.

Revelation of the relative truth
Is the pleasing third stage.

Purification of the relative truth
Is referred to as the fourth stage.

That which merges the two truths
Is known as union, the fifth stage.

From yet another perspective, vajra recitation itself is regarded as the foundation of the path since the main practice in the mind-focus [stage] is vajra recitation. The four stages of the completion phase (when mind-focus is included in vajra recitation) plus the creation phase constitute the five stages. This [way of differentiating the five] is taught in the *Continuation of the Kalachakra Tantra* and accords with the explanations [of the Guhyasamaja] written by Abhayakaragupta,¹⁵ Munishribhadra,¹⁶ and others.

It is not the case that none of those [sources] accept the stage of body isolation. However, they consider it to be a preliminary to the vajra-recitation stage and a subtle result of the creation phase. There are some individuals who accomplish [body isolation] as a side effect [of the creation phase]. Others—although not cultivating [body isolation] separately—still may develop vajra recitation and the other stages. Hence, [body isolation] is considered to be not absolutely required and therefore not presented as a separate stage.

In order to understand the meanings of those [five stages], one [should] learn, from the perspective of a gradual engagement, first the system of the creation phase and then the system of the six stages of the completion phase.¹⁷ The five stages are implicit [in those], and they constitute the extraordinary completion-phase [system] as formulated by Nagarjuna and Aryadeva. Knowledge of them is therefore indispensable. Consequently, [the seven stages—the creation phase and six completion-phase stages—

are presented next]. Only the essence of each stage and the divisions will be discussed.

[CREATION PHASE] [a']

The essence of the creation phase is described as follows: Its very cause is a creative process based on thought. Its essential nature is that of a deity yoga that may be either conceptual or nonconceptual. Its form is the purification of the three [processes] of cyclic existence (birth, death, and the intermediate state) through means that accord in elements with the three; and the utilization of those [three] as the path through means that accord in aspects with the three dimensions of awakening. Its purpose is that of a foundation that acts as the ripening agent for the completion phase. Its supportive element is contemplation accompanied by deliberate bliss and emptiness.

[Various aspects of] the creation phase are differentiated:

The creation phase can be divided into three contemplations: contemplation practiced on the basis of the creation phase;¹⁸ contemplation of the actual creation phase itself; [and contemplation of] the creation phase that is related to the completion phase. This is a differentiation made from the perspective of the individual meditator.

Considered in terms of the deity meditated upon, the creation phase is divided into two: the visualization of an entire mandala; and the visualization of a part of it.

It is also divided into branches of contemplation: the four branches of familiarization and attainment; the four yogas; the three contemplations; the six branches;¹⁹ and so forth.

Considered in terms of stages in the development of powers, the creation phase can be divided into familiarization, close familiarization, attainment, and great attainment.

Considered in terms of superior and inferior levels of meditation, the creation phase can be divided into conceptual yoga and single recollection.²⁰

These topics have already been treated in detail above but are included here as an ancillary in order that the components of this system's path can be understood in their entirety.

[BODY ISOLATION] [b']

The essence of [the stage of] body isolation consists in the deity's form, which, without being generated by thoughts, appears from the state of bliss and emptiness to the mind alone.

The body-isolation [stage] can be divided into two: equipoise; and post-equipose. Alternatively, four aspects are differentiated: the single sealed procedure of one hundred families; the second procedure of five families; the third procedure of three families; and a single sealed procedure of one great secret family.²¹

[VOICE ISOLATION] [c']

The essence of the [stage of] voice isolation [is a contemplation that] serves the functions of causing the major winds, primarily the life wind, to enter, abide, and dissolve in the central channel, and of stabilizing their dissolution [into vital essence]. This is done on the basis of knowing the characteristics of the winds²² and knowing the definitive meaning of mantras.²³

Voice isolation can be divided into three meditations: meditation on the vital essence of light at the nose-tip of the face; meditation on the indestructible vital essence at the nose-tip of the heart; and meditation on the vital essence of substance at the nose-tip of the secret place.²⁴

The first meditation consists of the vajra recitation of the four lords²⁵ (method); the vajra recitation of the four goddesses (wisdom); and the vajra recitation of the secondary winds (the secret), and so forth.²⁶ Of the many types of vajra recitation, this type [of the first voice-isolation meditation] is the vajra recitation that purifies the pathways of the channels. Moreover, this vajra recitation, when done for a very long time, can definitely bind the winds within the central channel. However, it is particularly recommended for releasing the coarse knots [of the channels] for the very [purpose of] purifying the pathways of the channels.

The second [the meditation on the indestructible vital essence at the nose-tip of the heart] is recommended for first gathering the winds in the central channel and finally binding them to the vital essence in the central channel.

The third [the meditation on the vital essence of substance at the nose-tip of the secret place] enhances the results of the previous two [meditations].

[MIND ISOLATION] [d']

The essence of [the stage of] mind isolation is the pristine awareness of bliss and emptiness [that manifests] through the stabilization of vital essence. This stabilization is due to thought-[generating] winds having dissolved for brief periods of time in the channel-wheels, through the force of meditation.²⁷

Two [aspects] of mind isolation are distinguished: the practice of mind isolation; and the actual mind isolation.²⁸ The second of those, the actual mind isolation, comprises four levels: the level of light; the level of the increase of light; the level of the culmination of light; and the final-example luminous clarity.²⁹

[ILLUSORY BODY] [c']

The essence of the illusory-body stage is described as follows: Its primary cause is the mere wind-mind of luminous clarity. The secondary condition for its manifestation is the bliss of molten [vital essence] resulting from the dissolution of winds into the indestructible [vital essence at the heart]. The form manifests as the [mandala-]circle of the deity or like an illusion. The experience is one that indicates the nature of bliss from the melting [of the vital essence]. Its function is that of a contemplation that can perform the activities of the yogin's body.³⁰

Four [aspects] of the illusory-body stage are distinguished: illusion in the state of equipoise; illusion in post-equipoise; illusion in the dream [state]; and illusion in the intermediate state.³¹ According to an alternative [explanation], the illusory-body [stage] has three divisions: newly attained; in progress; and final.³²

[LUMINOUS CLARITY] [f']

The essence of the stage of luminous clarity is described as follows: Its function is to vanquish the seeds of the emotional afflictions as well as their winds. Its essential nature is that of a path that brings about direct realization of the emptiness of innate great bliss.³³

Two [aspects] of luminous clarity are differentiated: the practice [to realize] true luminous clarity; and true luminous clarity in itself. Other expositions speak of the two divisions of an outer actual awakening and an

inner actual awakening; and the two divisions of the meditative absorption of total [apprehension] and the meditative absorption of [successive] destruction.³⁴

[UNION] [g']

The essence of [the stage of] union is the pristine awareness that is the inseparable essence of the two: the great bliss that directly realizes the very nature [of existence]; and the infinitude of pristine-awareness mandalas.³⁵

Two aspects are distinguished: union [that requires] training; and union of no [more] training. Union [that requires] training consists of the ten or twelve stages of an exalted being.³⁶ The union of no [more] training comprises the essential natures of the four dimensions of awakening and the five pristine awarenesses.

The essential points of visualization in those sets of meditations [as found] in the collected works of Butön Rinpoché and Jetsun Taranatha are included in the two systems of Marpa and Gö [Khugpa Lhetsé].³⁷ The essential points and sets of visualizations of these two systems have to be understood separately from their individual teachings.³⁸ These will not be elaborated upon at this point.

THE JNANAPADA TRADITION [2']

**In the Jnanapada system, vital essences and winds are made
workable**

**By means of the meditations on the four vital essences,
whereupon**

**Mind that has entered profundity, the essential nature of reality,
Unites inseparably with the clarity of the deity's body, the
great seal.**

The Guhyasamaja completion phase in the tradition of Jnanapada (Buddhashrijnana) [stems from] what are called the *Oral Teachings of Manjushri*.³⁹ These *Teachings* were directly transmitted by Arya [Manjushri] himself to the master Buddhashrijnana.⁴⁰ Having received Lord [Manjushri's] permission, Buddhajnana composed his own *Vital Essence of Liberation*.⁴¹ The meditations contained in those works, as they are generally

known, [are the yogas of the four vital essences, explained as follows]:

[The practitioner trains in the first] yoga, that of the indestructible vital essence at the heart, which is related to joy; [and then, the second,] the yoga of the secret vital essence at the jewel [the tip of the sex organ], related to supreme joy. After having first gained proficiency in those two yogas related to vital essences, [one trains in the third,] the wind yoga of the emanated vital essence at the upper nose-tip, related to special joy.

When one has gained proficiency in wind yoga, owing to the vital essences and winds having become workable, again one trains [in yoga], the [fourth] special [yoga], that of the indestructible vital essence, related to innate joy.⁴² On the basis of that, one repeatedly familiarizes oneself with dissolution into luminous clarity in the forward order and arising [from it] in the reverse order.⁴³ As a result, one unites with the pristine awareness that is inseparable profundity and clarity. Buddhashrijana's *Oral Teachings of Manjushri* states:⁴⁴

The nature of all phenomena, from form
To omniscience, is the pristine awareness
Of inseparable profundity and clarity,
Utterly pure like the center of space.

Thus, it is generally taught that the ultimate end of the completion phase is the pristine awareness of inseparable profundity and clarity, which is the fundamental state or true condition of all phenomena—from form to omniscience—of cyclic existence and liberation, and whose nature is utter purity, like the center of space.

That being so, by means of the meditations of the yogas of the four vital essences, the vital essences and winds of the body are made workable.⁴⁵ As a result, the mind itself, which has entered profundity, the essential nature [of reality], unites inseparably with clarity, the illusion-like body of the deity, the great seal.⁴⁶ This final result is reached by cultivating the two [profundity and clarity] not alternately but simultaneously. [Buddhashrijana's] *Vital Essence of Liberation* says:⁴⁷

Totally free from any kind of concept,
Utterly inconceivable and inexpressible,
Stainless like space, the source of everything:
It is known as profundity beyond scrutiny.

Bearing the form of the great seal,
 It is like an illusion or a rainbow,
 Purifying one's own and others' minds:
 It is known as sublime clarity.

The supreme nature of their inseparability
 Is the essence that encompasses all things,
 Utterly untouched by cyclic existence: it is
 Known as the ultimate dimension of phenomena.

Profundity refers to that which can neither be conceived of nor expressed in words and is devoid of the stains of conceptual elaboration and labeling. It is simply mind itself, bound by no limits whatsoever, like space. Clarity refers to the unceasing natural luminosity [of mind itself], utterly clear and stainless, which manifests as the diversity [of appearances], like an illusion or a rainbow. Those two [aspects] of profundity and clarity, merged inseparably as the path of union, will lead one to freedom, while neither profundity nor clarity on its own can do so.

Thus, the ultimate crucial point to be reached in every completion phase is what is called the “union of the two truths,” “union of profundity and clarity,” or “union of bliss and emptiness.” In all the completion-phase [systems] of the great chariot[-like] traditions it is necessary to have an understanding—gained through some kind of sequential explanation of the way the union is and the way it is inseparable—of this [union] that is the principal cause of enlightenment. In the context of the creation phase as well, that very crucial point [is the basis on which] is explained the step of arising from the state of emptiness as the body of the deity, after having entered emptiness through [uttering] the *svabhava* mantra.⁴⁸ The purpose of all other completion-phase [systems] is to attain that pristine-awareness body of union. Thus, after considering the ways in which that is brought about in the methods of practice, one will thereby grasp the crucial points of the completion phase.

The esoteric instructions and explanatory teachings that are particular⁴⁹ to the Jnanapada system consist of exactly three topics of teaching: the instructions on the inseparability of profundity and clarity (contained in the *Oral Instructions of Manjushri*); the instructions on the pristine awareness of the supreme initiation; and the instructions contained in [Bud-

dhajjana's] unsurpassable *Vital Essence of Liberation*.⁵⁰ The first of the three comprises instruction on profundity, the ineffable; instruction on clarity, the mandala; and instruction on the ultimate, [the state of] union. The last of the three contains extremely deep forms of instructions on the creation phase and on [the yogas of] the four vital essences or three stages of the completion phase.⁵¹

There are three general forms of instructions set forth by the great master Jnanapada:

[The first is] a completion phase for the least capable, who would [simply] make a connection to the completion phase by means of aspiration to practice it in future lives but cultivate only the creation phase in this life.

[The second is] a completion phase for those of average capability, who in this life would cultivate mainly the completion phase while accomplishing the creation phase as a side effect. This is the path [that leads] to awakening in the intermediate state [between death and rebirth] or in another lifetime.

[The third is] a completion phase for the most capable, which is the path of the creation and completion phases sealed as a union. This brings about awakening within this very lifetime. Of those three, the instructions [discussed above] belong to the last form.⁵²

The set of instructions in [Buddhashrijana's] *Vital Essence of Liberation* is to be applied to the individual mandalas of the five families, such as Akshobhya[-Guhyasamaja] of the Jnanapada tradition, as well as to the [mandala of] Avalokiteshvara-Guhyasamaja, and so forth, of the Jonangpa tradition. Therefore, other sets of instructions for those practices need not be sought. Lord [Kunga] Drolchok⁵³ states that these [completion-phase instructions] constitute the sixfold yoga of Guhyasamaja taught in the *Continuation of the Root Tantra*.⁵⁴

THE RED YAMARI COMPLETION PHASE [bb]

This section is presented in two parts: a common completion phase; and a special completion phase.

THE COMMON COMPLETION PHASE [1']

The four yogas are shape, mantra, consecration, and pristine awareness.

The view to be understood by means of great master Shridhara's teachings has been examined in the creation-phase section. The completion-phase view is explained in accordance with the citations taken from the hero Saraha's *Doha*⁵⁵ [found] in the commentary on the last chapter of the *Black [Yamari Tantra]*.⁵⁶ One should therefore gain extensive understanding [of this view by studying] the *Treasury of Doha*. The great master Jnanapada's explanation is also the same as that [of the *Doha*].⁵⁷

The main part of the completion phase, formed of various procedures that are methods of meditation on emptiness, consists of four practices: the shape yoga (initial yoga); the mantra yoga (subsequent yoga); the consecration yoga (surpassing yoga); and the pristine-awareness yoga (great yoga).⁵⁸

The first, the shape yoga or initial yoga, comprises three stages: the stage of self-consecration; the stage of consecrating appearances; and the stage of consecrating the union.⁵⁹

The second, the mantra yoga or subsequent yoga, consists of the main practice of wind [yoga], which comprises preliminary, main, and conclusion parts; and the auxiliary practices, consisting of the upward transference [of consciousness] and the transference [of consciousness] to one's master.⁶⁰

The third, the consecration yoga or surpassing yoga, consists of [the practice of] one's own body as method; and that of another's body as wisdom (familiarization, attainment, and the action [of the union]).⁶¹

The fourth, the wisdom yoga or great yoga, has three aspects: the preliminary practice to bring about the dissolution of the subtle and coarse constituents in the central channel;⁶² the main part in which the [illusory] body and luminous clarity are applied as a union; and the supplementary practice by means of which negative conditions are implemented on the path according to the text on the six ways of averting [obstacles].⁶³

This [system of completion phase] can generally be applied to any form of the creation phase. However, it is very closely related primarily to three [tantras,] Red Yamari, Black Yamari, and Vajrabhairava,⁶⁴ in the expositions of the adept Shridhara⁶⁵ and is applied especially to the thirteen-deities Red Yamari [practices].

THE SPECIAL COMPLETION PHASE [2']

Another system, the Red Yamari unelaborate completion phase,
 consists
 Of a preliminary practice whereby elaborations are cut and
 powers gained;
 A main practice to manifest ineffable pristine awareness; a
 conclusion
 Of six yogas (master, compassion, root, *pranayama*, substance,
 And Bhairava), plus a teaching on the way to dispel obstacles.

Another [system] is that of the superior completion phase of Yamari [based on] the oral teachings of Virupa, a master outstanding in strengths.⁶⁶ The *Vajra Verses* [i.e., Virupa's *Esoteric Instructions on Essential Reality*] states:⁶⁷

Even though one intellectually understands
 The utterly unelaborate speech of one's master,
 One's mind will not be touched by the unelaborate
 So long as it is agitated by disturbing elaborations.
 When one's mind simply abides in the ordinary,
 Elaboration will merge with the unelaborate
 In the state of the sameness of a single taste.

Accordingly, the esoteric instructions on the utterly unelaborate consist of a preliminary practice, a main practice, and a concluding practice.

The preliminary practice is guru yoga. By means of its three forms of offering, [conceptual] elaborations are cut,⁶⁸ and the powers of the three pristine awarenesses are gained.⁶⁹

The main practice contains the principles [related to] the three [i.e., body, wind, and mind] by means of which ineffable pristine awareness is manifested.⁷⁰

The concluding practice can be succinctly condensed into two methods: [one,] the sixfold means for cultivating pure and total awareness (bodhi-chitta); and [two,] the way to dispel obstacles or hindrances. The first comprises six yogas, namely, guru yoga (the blessing); compassion yoga (the unequalled); causal yoga (the root); wind yoga (the *pranayama*); substance yoga (the interconnectedness); and the Vajrabhairava yoga. The sec-

ond [has five aspects]: the causes of obstacles; their contributory factors; methods for dispelling them; measure [of success] in dispelling obstacles; and six types of instructions for dispelling them.⁷¹

Those esoteric instructions constitute what is widely known as the “unelaborate completion-phase system of Red Yamari.” In this land [of Tibet], the first person to write down the esoteric instructions was Lowo Lotsawa.⁷² His commentary on the *Concluding Session*⁷³ and other of his works should be studied in order to understand the significance and essential points of the practices and their applications.

THE BLACK YAMARI COMPLETION PHASE [cc]

**The Black Enemy tantra teaches the initial yoga of six branches;
The subsequent yoga, practiced by means of focus and
examination;
The complete yoga of deliberate behavior with an awareness
female;
And the great yoga of entering conduct through luminous clarity
And the awareness-seal. Those father tantras form the main
systems.**

Practitioners of the *Yamari Tantra*⁷⁴ who are capable of [cultivating] the completion phase and wish to practice the supreme familiarization [should] enter the four stages of yoga [the initial, the subsequent, the surpassing, and the great].

The initial yoga comprises six branches, namely, withdrawal, meditative absorption, wind yoga, retention, recollection, and contemplation. By means of these, the culmination of the first special stage is reached. The six branches of the initial yoga have the same names as the vajra yogas, but their meanings are different.⁷⁵

Following the focus on mantra, focus on mind, and examination of the vajra fields of each of body, speech, and mind, and of all three faculties together, the subsequent yoga is cultivated. As a result, stability in the two phases⁷⁶ is achieved.⁷⁷

The next, the complete yoga, involves setting up the mandala for practice and engaging in an elaborate [form of] deliberate behavior with an awareness female.⁷⁸

The great yoga is practiced once stability [in the third yoga] is attained.

One dispenses with [the practices related to] the external mandala, and so forth, and trains solely in entering the luminous clarity of bliss and emptiness and arising from it during equipoise and post-equipoise. Forming a link through either an action seal or a pristine-awareness seal, one enters the all-encompassing conduct of the lord.⁷⁹

This [system] is taught in the *Black Yamari Tantra*, and its meaning elucidated in the work of the great master Devakarachandra.⁸⁰ These [texts] were translated, and [the system] practiced and realized, by Zhang Lotsawa Sherab Lama.⁸¹ This [presentation] is a condensation of [the system's] profound meaning that accords with the progression of the path of the Jnanapada tradition [of Guhyasamaja] and other [systems].⁸²

Those [systems of the Guhyasamaja, Red Yamari, and Black Yamari tantras] are [formulations of the] completion phase of the highest [yoga] father tantras that are widely known here [in Tibet]. They constitute the main [father-tantra completion-phase] sets of instructions that form autonomous systems of teachings.

In addition, numerous minor [formulations of the completion phase] exist. There are, for example, the following systems for the completion phase of the Mahavajrabhairava [tantra]:⁸³ the gathering of nectar, together with the nose-tip yoga (the system of the great master Shantipa);⁸⁴ the esoteric instructions for the innate dimension of utterly unelaborate profundity; the completion phase of the tiers of three beings; the yoga of the buffalo face and of the erect penis,⁸⁵ and so forth (the system of Ra [Lotsawa]);⁸⁶ the esoteric instructions for the horn-tips [method of] holding the mind; the esoteric instructions for wandering at night,⁸⁷ and so forth (the system of Kyo);⁸⁸ the inner fire involving four channel-wheels⁸⁹ (the system of Zhang).⁹⁰ [Apart from these,] there is the completion phase of the *Net of Magical Manifestation of Manjushri*,⁹¹ the great vastness of which can be naturally inferred from its tantra and esoteric instructions for the practice. Thus, there seem to be countless examples.

8. MOTHER TANTRA SYSTEMS: KALACHAKRA AND HEVAJRA

ii. Completion-Phase Systems in Highest Yoga Mother Tantras

[II.B.2.c.ii]

aa. The Kalachakra Completion Phase

- 1' Withdrawal
- 2' Meditative Absorption
- 3' Yoga of the Winds
- 4' Retention
- 5' Recollection
- 6' Contemplation

bb. The Hevajra Completion Phase

- 1' The Eight Autonomous Systems
 - a' The First
 - b' The Second
 - c' The Third
 - d' The Fourth
 - e' The Fifth
 - f' The Sixth
 - g' The Seventh
 - h' The Eighth
- 2' Minor Systems

[This chapter continues the presentation of the completion phase in terms of its branches. What follows now is] part two: completion-phase [systems] in highest yoga mother tantras. This discussion has seven parts: [one,] the

completion phase in Kalachakra; [two,] in Hevajra; [three,] in Chakrasamvara; [four,] in Chatuhpitha; [five,] in Mahamaya; [six,] in Buddhakapala; and [seven,] in Tarabhava. [The first two parts, the completion-phase systems of Kalachakra and Hevajra, are treated in this chapter.]

THE KALACHAKRA COMPLETION PHASE [aa]

**The king of tantras presents the six branches of vajra yoga:
withdrawal,
Meditative absorption, wind yoga, retention, recollection, and
contemplation.**

The *Supreme Primordial Buddha* [*Kalachakra Tantra*],¹ the king of all yogin and yogini tantras, presents clearly and without concealment the six branches of vajra yoga, which are concealed in the concise tantras and are the stated meaning of the extensive root tantras. [The branches are contained in the] *Kalachakra Root Tantra*. Moreover, the *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* states:²

Withdrawal, meditative absorption,
Wind yoga, retention, recollection,
And contemplation: these are said
To be the six branches of yoga.

The *Chakrasamvara Root Tantra* states:³

Mantra recitation, meditative absorption,
And bliss will bring about achievement.

In addition, the *Hevajra Tantra* states:⁴

The yogin who meditates on the six branches....

There are many similar references. In short, the six branches are withdrawal, meditative absorption, wind yoga, retention, recollection, and contemplation. Those six branches [fit into other frameworks as follows]:

In relation to the yogas of the four vajras, withdrawal and meditative absorption constitute the vajra yoga of awakened body; wind yoga

and retention, the vajra yoga of awakened speech; recollection, the vajra yoga of awakened mind; and contemplation, the vajra yoga of pristine awareness.

In terms of the four branches of familiarization and attainment, withdrawal and meditative absorption constitute familiarization; wind yoga and retention, near attainment; recollection constitutes attainment; and contemplation, great attainment.

In terms of the three virtues, withdrawal and meditative absorption represent virtue in the beginning; wind yoga and retention, virtue in the middle; and recollection and contemplation, virtue in the end.

In terms of cause and result, three—withdrawal, wind yoga, and recollection—are causal branches; and three—meditative absorption, retention, and contemplation—resultant branches.

All six, however, are one in being the yoga of the great seal. These six branches form the core of the path of meditation on the great seal of empty form endowed with the supreme of all aspects. That [great seal] is the supreme of wisdom females. Thus, [the six branches] form the supramundane path of pristine awareness [through] wisdom. During the first five branches, a true moment of changeless bliss is not achieved. However, from the point of [first] seeing empty form, there will be a fraction of a moment of changeless bliss [in all the branches].

As each branch has been realized, the next branch arises. The branches are therefore part of the sequence as they first arise.

WITHDRAWAL [1']

The first [branch] is called withdrawal. [The Tibetan] term *sor sdud*, a translation of the [Sanskrit] word *pratyahara*,⁵ means to sever the connection between one's five ordinary sense powers and their five objects and withdraw the dissipated consciousnesses; and [to cause] one's five sense powers, pristine awareness in nature, to enjoy, consume, and seize⁶ the five objects, luminous clarity in nature. In short, "withdrawal" means to withdraw the mind from ordinary appearances, whereupon one enters the manifestations of pristine awareness.⁷

The essence of withdrawal is a nonconceptual [state] that has the capacity to withdraw the winds [and direct them] into the central channel by means of [practice involving] the three unmoving [faculties].⁸ Withdrawal comprises two yogas, that of the day and that of the night, [both of which

are necessary for these reasons:] The environmental world undergoes both creation and destruction. The beings who inhabit it are subject to both birth and death. A year is made up of two passages.⁹ A month has two [lunar] phases [waxing and waning]. A day consists of both daytime and nighttime. Vital essences have left and right cycles.¹⁰ Time junctures and winds have both even and uneven transits.¹¹ These and other [examples] represent the purity that is differentiated in terms of method and wisdom, owing to which both yogas, the day and the night, are definitely necessary.

The objects [of withdrawal] are the four signs of the night yoga, beginning with the smoke, and the six signs of the day yoga, beginning with the blazing. These constitute the ten signs with definite [forms], which are actually seen by the sense powers.¹² They are the principal objects.

The ground to be purified of stains by means of all six branches is solely the true nature [of things], the essence of the transcendent ones, and therefore has no divisions. However, differentiations may be made in terms of what is to be purified, which in general means the thirty-six psychophysical constituents.¹³ Of those, the portion that is withdrawal's own sphere of purification comprises six [constituents] that form a single group: the element of pristine awareness,¹⁴ the aggregate of pristine awarenesses, [the mental sense power, the objects of sounds, the male regenerative faculty, and the activity of discharging urine].

This branch's immediate result is the accomplishment of the [power of] words of truth and the fruitions of mantras.¹⁵

The ultimate result is the manifestation of the infinite mandalas of the six deities, Vajrasattva and the others, who are [the purified] six [constituents] of the pristine-awareness-element group.¹⁶

MEDITATIVE ABSORPTION [2']

The second branch is that of meditative absorption. The [Tibetan] term *bsam gtan* [translates the Sanskrit] word *dhyana*, which means mind focused unwaveringly on an object of meditation. To explain [by using an example], if a door's bar has been properly installed, the door will not become warped or shift position, and one will then have control over its opening and closing. Similarly, the meaning [of *bsam gtan*] is to gain control over [mind's focus on] the object of meditation.

The essence of meditative absorption is that of a contemplation undi-

videdly focused on the manifesting signs of luminous clarity. Such contemplation is accompanied by five factors, namely, intelligence, examination, analysis, joy, and bliss, whose objects—the various subtle images [of the universe], and so forth—[manifest] with five qualities.¹⁷

The sphere of purification comprises six [constituents] that form a single group: the element of space, the aggregate of consciousnesses, [the sense power of the ears, the objects of mental phenomena, the female regenerative faculty, and the activity of emitting regenerative fluid].

The immediate result is the development of the five [kinds of] clairvoyance such as the divine eye.¹⁸

The ultimate result is the manifestation of the six deities, Buddha Akshobhya and the others, who are [the purified] six [constituents] of the space-element group.¹⁹

YOGA OF THE WINDS [3']

The third branch is the yoga of the winds. [The Tibetan] terms *srog rtsol* [“life exertion”] and *srog 'gag pa* [“life stopping”] are translations of the [Sanskrit] word *pranayama*. In those terms, *srog* [“life”] is a name for wind. To stop the winds or to exert [control over] the winds means to cause them to enter [the central channel].

The objects to be worked on [in the branch] of wind yoga are all of the channels, winds, and vital essences of the vajra body in general. Of those, however, the main objects are the six channels: three channels above the navel (the right channel, left channel, and central channel) and three channels below the navel (the channel of feces, channel of urine, and channel of semen); and the two winds: the life wind and the downward-voiding wind.²⁰

The purpose of the wind-yoga meditation is to bring together the causes for unchanging bliss. One approach to that is the great seal of empty form,²¹ which is therefore cultivated even in the contexts of the withdrawal and meditative absorption [branches]. The main approach, however, is to gain victory over the winds and bind them within the central channel, whereby the vajra body²² becomes completely pure, and deathlessness and mastery over the vital essences are attained.

The essence of wind yoga is stopping the winds [from flowing] in the right and left channels [and bringing them] into the central channel,²³ and stopping the winds from flowing in the lower feces and urine channels

[and bringing them] into the conch-shell channel.²⁴ It is a contemplation that unifies the life wind flowing in the central channel and the downward-voiding wind flowing in the conch-shell channel.

The sphere of purification comprises six [constituents] that form a single group: the element of wind, the aggregate of mental formations, [the sense power of the nose, the objects of tangible things, the faculty of the voice, and the activity of defecation].

The immediate result of wind yoga is to accrue [various] benefits by stopping erratic winds from flowing in the left and right channels. These benefits include receiving prophecies from and being blessed by buddhas and bodhisattvas; enjoyment of the six sensory objects, forms and so forth, as manifestations of pristine awareness; developing clairvoyances of the six sense powers; and acquiring power over human and nonhuman beings.

The ultimate result is to attain [the manifestation of] the six deities, Amoghasiddhi and the others, who are [the purified] six [constituents] of the wind-element group.²⁵

RETENTION [4']

The fourth branch is that of retention. [The Sanskrit] word *dharana* means both “to retain” (*'dzin pa*) and “that which is retained” (*gzung bya*) and therefore has various translations. However, in this context, the meaning is to retain (*'dzin pa*) the winds so that they do not come and go.

The object to be worked on [in the branch of retention] is the wind of bliss, which is the wind mixed with²⁶ the indestructible vital essence.

The purpose of the meditation is to bind bodhichitta so that it does not move and thereby to produce the inner fire’s blazing light, which is the root from which originate the special empty forms that directly induce unchanging bliss.

The essence of retention is, in general, a contemplation in which the upper, lower, right, and left winds²⁷ [are brought into the central channel] where they dissolve into the central-channel vital essences present at the five (or six) channel-wheels.²⁸ In particular, once [that] is accomplished, and when the life wind has fully penetrated the vital essence at the forehead, it is a contemplation in which mind is focused on the unemitted vital essence that is fixed at the forehead.

The sphere of purification comprises six [constituents] that form a single group: the element of fire, the aggregate of feelings, [the sense power

of the eye, the objects of tastes, the faculty of the arms, and the activity of going].

The immediate results from retention consist in the elimination of physical suffering, such as aging and illness; [gaining] the capacity to use emotional afflictions as the path, and so on, thus defeating the four kinds of demonic forces to some extent; and the development of special strengths of body, speech, and mind.²⁹

The ultimate result from retention is the manifestation of the six deities, Ratnasambhava and the others, who are [the purified] six [constituents] of the fire-element group.³⁰

RECOLLECTION [5']

The fifth branch is recollection. [The Sanskrit] word *anusmṛiti* means to recollect. [In this context, the Tibetan] term *rjes dran* means to recollect what was meditated upon in the previous [branches] and to do so intensely; and to repeatedly meditate upon the great seal of empty form and to exert a strong effort in doing so.

The objects to be worked on [in the branch of recollection] are all the channels, winds, and vital essences in general, the principal being the empty form of the inner fire's blazing light, together with its bases, the vital essences of the four channel-wheels (or six), and that which depends on them, the bliss of melting.

The purpose [of this branch] is the actual achievement of unchanging bliss for which one trains in the undispersed bliss [from the] melting [of vital essence].

The essence of recollection is a contemplation [described as follows]: With the support of a seal (or without seal), the inner fire [is ignited]. Its blazing light manifests as the empty forms of the coarse and subtle aspects of the three realms, principally the [empty-form] male and female deities in union. Focused on this, [the practitioner] rests in authentic equipoise, free of thoughts, [and achieves] an undivided contemplation in which undispersed bliss from the melting [of vital essence] is repeatedly generated.

The sphere of purification comprises six [constituents] that form a single group: the element of water, the aggregate of recognitions, [the sense power of the tongue, the objects of visible forms, the faculty of the legs, and the activity of taking].

The immediate result is that the mind actually manifests as a deity even

though the body is not transformed. Consequently, countless [kinds of] clairvoyance and miraculous powers are gained.

The ultimate result is the manifestation of the six deities, Amitabha and the others, who are [the purified] six [constituents] of the water-element group.³¹

CONTEMPLATION [6']

The sixth branch is contemplation. The [Sanskrit] word *samadhi* means to hold [the mind] completely in equipoise. [The Tibetan term] *ting nge 'dzin* therefore means the mind's abiding in the inseparability of subject and object, free from [the duality of] apprehender and apprehended.

The objects of this [branch] are both empty form and great bliss.

The purpose of the meditation is to augment unchanging bliss and to purify the fully ripened [karmic] body [so that it dissolves] into the expanse [of emptiness], thereby attaining the body of nondual pristine awareness.

The essence of this branch is contemplation in which is experienced the union of the two: unchanging bliss (wisdom); and the pristine-awareness dimension [of emptiness] endowed with the supreme of all aspects. These two—a single pristine awareness differentiated [into two only] conceptually—are experienced free from the dualistic view that regards them as different.

The sphere of purification comprises six [constituents] that form a single group: the element of earth, the aggregate of forms, [the sense power of the body, the objects of odors, the faculty of the anus, and the activity of speaking].

The immediate results [are delineated as follows]: If, from its first arising, contemplation is then cultivated continuously, the level of genuine truth—the abiding nature [of reality]—will be attained in three years and three fortnights;³² one's fully ripened [karmic] body will dissolve into the expanse [of emptiness]; and the body of total pristine awareness, a nondual union, will thereby be realized. That would be [the state of] a great bodhisattva adorned by many qualities such as the ten powers.³³

The ultimate result of contemplation is the manifestation of the mandalas of the six deities, Vairochana and the others, who are [the purified] six [constituents] of the earth-element group.³⁴

This [Kalachakra completion phase] is the intended destination of all tantras. It is the ultimate of all [forms of] completion phase. Therefore, it has been treated here to some extent. Other completion-phase [systems] have their own vast and profound points to be understood regarding spheres of purification, purificatory means, purposes, results, and so forth. These will not be treated here for fear the discussion might become too lengthy.

THE HEVAJRA COMPLETION PHASE [bb]

This discussion is presented in two parts: the paths of the eight autonomous systems; and the minor systems.

THE EIGHT AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS [1']

THE FIRST [a']

Hevajra's esoteric-instruction system includes the path-and-fruition instructions.

There are many completion-phase traditions of the Hevajra tantra—the essence of [all] mother tantras—that were elucidated by individual masters. Of those, eight autonomous systems of essential instructions have been introduced into Tibet at different times.

The first is that of the lord of yogins Virupa, the completion phase of the esoteric-instructions system, which includes the path-and-fruition essential instructions. This will be discussed briefly in subsequent [sections of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*].³⁵

THE SECOND [b']

Dombipa's expertise was that of the yoga of inner fire.

The expertise of the great adept Dombipa³⁶ was that of the “vital essence of spring,”³⁷ a completion-phase yoga of inner fire³⁸ [contained] in his sadhana of the *Light of Nectar*.³⁹ That very system is what was primarily taught by his disciples, Durjayachandra and others.⁴⁰

THE THIRD [c']

Saroruha taught the three: self-consecration, entering, and re-emerging.

The master Saroruhapada⁴¹ taught chiefly [a system of] three trainings: [one,] self-consecration by means of achieving a clear image in the yoga of the six colors (first black, etc.) in the creation phase; [two,] after having destroyed the colors, entering the luminous clarity [stage] (of the four [stages of] light) in reverse order; [and three,] re-emerging from that [luminous clarity] in the forward order.⁴²

THE FOURTH [d']

Samayavajra expounded the subtle yoga and yoga of the sphere.

Krishnasamayavajra⁴³ expounded the subtle yoga and the yoga of the vital-essence sphere⁴⁴ after having made those yogas his expertise.

The second, third, and fourth systems are similar in that, in all of them, first stability in the creation phase is gained and the vital essences are made workable. Once that is achieved, through the steps of successive destruction⁴⁵ one trains in entering and re-emerging from luminous clarity, thereby attaining the body of union.

THE FIFTH [e']

Naropa's teachings formed Marpa's twofold system of mixing and transference.

Mixing comprises the creation-phase trainings in forms, vital essences, and union;

And completion-phase meditations of inner fire, illusory body, and luminous clarity.

Transference consists of a main practice and an auxiliary of entering the deceased.

The [Hevajra] teachings of the outstanding scholar Naropa⁴⁶ formed [the basis for] the tradition of his heart-son and great regent, Marpa the

Translator.⁴⁷ This system consists of two essential instructions: mixing and transference.⁴⁸

Mixing comprises instructions for the creation phase and instructions for the completion phase. The creation-phase instructions concern training with regard to forms; training in the sphere [of vital essence]; and training in the union [of creation and completion].⁴⁹ The completion-phase instructions concern the inner fire, illusory body, and luminous clarity. The inner-fire [practice] has two instructions: one's own body as method; and the body of another as wisdom.⁵⁰ The illusory-body [practice] has two instructions: dream-state illusion⁵¹ to give rise to an experience of the [previously] unexperienced illusory body; and waking-state illusion to stabilize and enhance [the experience] that has arisen. The second is twofold: the illusion of appearances;⁵² and the illusion of the intermediate state.⁵³ The luminous-clarity [practice] comprises four essential instructions: the luminous clarity of the intrinsic nature; the luminous clarity of meditation; the luminous clarity of sleep; and the luminous clarity of death.⁵⁴ Those constitute the way to practice the essential instructions for mixing.

Transference [of consciousness] comprises two essential instructions. One concerns the upward transference; the other, entering the deceased (an auxiliary practice). The first of those has two aspects: the transference [of consciousness] that one trains in; and transference [of consciousness] in a forceful way [at the time of death].⁵⁵ The second has [two aspects]: the training; and the actual application.⁵⁶

THE SIXTH [f']

Maitripa's oral teachings are known as the nine sets of the profound path.

These are all contained in the practices of inner fire, seals, and great seal.

The oral teachings of Lord Maitripa,⁵⁷ a disciple of the outstanding adept Shri Shavaripa,⁵⁸ formed a completion-phase [system] that was transmitted by the Venerable [Marpa] of Lhodrak.⁵⁹ This system is known as the "cycles of nine paths" or "nine sets of the profound path." All aspects of it are contained in three esoteric instructions: inner fire, the seals, and the great seal.⁶⁰

The first, inner fire, includes a preliminary wind[-yoga] and the main training in inner fire.⁶¹

The second, the seals, comprises three meditations: the action seal, the imaginary seal, and the meditation on one's own body as bliss.⁶²

The third, the great seal, has three⁶³ essential instructions: unifying the dispersed [aspects of the] ground of all; using the manifestations of the ground of all as the path; and the inconceivable ground of all.⁶⁴

THE SEVENTH [g']

**Vyadalipa taught the way to make the life force enter the
central channel**

**And, once it has entered, the way to develop the bliss that is
unchanging.**

[This] system of the great adept Vyadalipa, a disciple of Virupa,⁶⁵ through which is practiced the essence of the definitive meaning of the Hevajra tantra, is set forth in two parts: [the way] the life [force] is made to enter the central channel; and, once it has entered, the development and stabilization of unchanging bliss.

For the first of these, one achieves the abiding of mind in the central channel (which is the method to bring about [the abiding of] the life [force] in the central channel) and causes the two pathways [right and left channels] to enter the central channel in a peaceful way. This practice, [carried out] by means of six crucial elements, causes all the winds of the right and left [channels] to enter the central channel.⁶⁶

When that occurs, there arises a nonconceptual contemplation, accompanied by utterly refined bliss. The blazing of the natural inner fire⁶⁷ causes the indestructible vital essence at the heart to melt so that the four joys are attained. The conceptions associated with the three poisons, the [sensory] consciousnesses, and mental consciousness are made to enter the state of the luminous clarity that is an example, after which the pristine awareness of bliss and emptiness is manifested in the form of a deity. By familiarizing with entering and re-emerging from that state [of luminous clarity], one attains the great seal.

THE EIGHTH [h']

The great adept Shantigupta's system comprises four seals: the
 pledge seal,
 Practiced by applying subtle and vital-essence yogas; the real
 action seal;
 The phenomena seal on all appearances; and the great seal of six
 branches.
 As a supplement to those, there is an introduction to the
 authentic view.

[This] Hevajra completion-phase [system] containing four essential principles [is] the essence of four seals:

[The first is] the pledge seal. This is practiced through applying in combination the subtle yoga based on the winds⁶⁸ and the vital-essence yoga of blazing and dripping based on the four channel-wheels and the two.⁶⁹

[The second is the action seal.] Once one is able to elicit bliss and emptiness by means of one's own body as method⁷⁰ and has gained mastery over the winds, one trains in [methods involving] a real action seal and an imaginary seal.⁷¹

[The third is the seal of phenomena.] Once bliss has been developed to the fullest extent, [one practices] the seal of phenomena, which is to seal all appearances with bliss, whereby all phenomena become the seal.⁷²

[The fourth is the great seal.] Having perfected one's experiences of [the first] three seals, or having gained [at least] some familiarity with them, one meditates on the great seal, the six-branch yoga of withdrawal, meditative absorption, and so forth.

As a supplement to those, there is an introduction to the [authentic] view, [which entails] (1) equipoise⁷³ [with the understanding] that external things are [simply] experiences of the mind; that these mere experiences have no inherent nature, like the moon reflected on the surface of water; and that the cognizer of experience also lacks inherent nature; (2) the unification of intrinsic awareness and natural bliss; and (3) [the knowledge] that cyclic existence is uncreated and that everything exists as the naturally present mandala of true reality. [This] pursuit of the definitive meaning of meditation is the system of Shantigupta,⁷⁴ a great master in this age of conflict. It contains the literal meanings of the actual tantric teach-

ings and elucidates them in close connection with the ultimate and definitive meanings of tantra.

MINOR SYSTEMS [2']

There are many minor teachings such as the *Single Lamp*.

[In addition to those eight,] there are many minor cycles of teachings on the completion phase of Hevajra, such as [those contained in] the cycles of the path to be explained [in subsequent sections of the *Infinite Ocean*];⁷⁵ the great master Shantipa's system of the completion phase of the *Innate Yoga*;⁷⁶ and Shri Sattvanatha's *Single Lamp* esoteric instructions.⁷⁷

9. MOTHER TANTRA SYSTEMS: CHAKRASAMVARA

cc. The Chakrasamvara Completion Phase [II.B.2.c.ii.cc]

1' The Preamble

2' The Detailed Exposition

a' The Tradition of Luipa

b' The Tradition of Ghantapa

c' The Tradition of Krishna

[This chapter presents] part three [of the discussion of completion-phase systems in highest yoga mother tantras]: the completion phase in the Chakrasamvara tantra. A preamble is followed by a detailed exposition.

THE PREAMBLE [1']

There are three great chariot traditions of Chakrasamvara.

THE DETAILED EXPOSITION [2']

This section has three parts: the tradition of Luipa; the tradition of Ghantapa; and the tradition of Krishna.

THE TRADITION OF LUIPA [a']

Luipa's tradition has a completion phase to strike crucial points
of the cause

And a second one to acquire mastery of the awakened qualities of the result.

The first is twofold, based on the emissary path and based on the yoga path.

For the yoga path, the followers of Pamtingpa use the three designations:

Gathering of vajra-beings, gathering of syllables, and gathering of vital essences,

Corresponding to the instructions on the great yoga (relaxation), instructions

On wind recitation (the coarse), and instructions on vajra recitation (the subtle).

The body of the deity, luminous clarity, and their union constitute the result.

The lord of adepts, Luipada,¹ was the first to establish a chariot[-like] tradition of Chakrasamvara, the very heart of the mother tantras. From his teachings was derived a tradition of the completion phase of the [*Chakra*]samvara *Abridged Tantra*,² consisting of two aspects: a completion phase to strike the crucial points related to the vajra body (the cause); and a completion phase to acquire mastery of awakened qualities (the result).

The first aspect has two [approaches]: the completion phase based on the female-emissary path; and the completion phase based on the yoga path.³ To the latter completion phase, followers of Abhayakirti (Nepal's Pamtingpa)—Malgyo Lotsawa and others—⁴ applied the designation “the three gatherings,” namely, the gathering of vajra-beings, the gathering of syllables, and the gathering of vital essences.⁵ The meanings indicated by those names⁶ can be explained using different names: the esoteric instructions on the great yoga (relaxation), the esoteric instructions on recitation [connected with] winds (the coarse), and the esoteric instructions on vajra recitation (the subtle).

By means of the first, the great yoga, the winds are gathered and the channel pathways purified.⁷ By means of the second, wind recitation, the channel-knots are loosened and the winds mastered.⁸ By means of the third, vajra recitation, the winds and vital essences are bound (as the preliminary practice), and the winds and mind are halted and made to dissolve in the central channel (as the main practice).⁹

If one is cultivating the yoga path [as one's main practice], during the third aspect (vajra recitation), one's practice will be enhanced by applying the female-emissary path. If one is cultivating the female-emissary path, one's practice will be enhanced by applying the yoga path. If one is cultivating both of them equally, they will act together, like competitors [aiming for the same goal].

Luipada, the crown ornament of the lords of yogins, explains these points in his work known as the *Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious [Lord]*,¹⁰ a synopsis of the *Yoginisancharya Tantra*¹¹ and the earliest of the commentaries on the *Chakrasamvara [Tantra]*.

That being said, with regard to the yoga path, Luipa's text [*Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord*] states:¹²

With vowels and consonants imagined in front,
Settle at rest by means of the great yoga.

That represents the first esoteric instruction [that of the great yoga]. [The text] also says:¹³

With the sphere of the moon complete,
Imagine it to be in the channel's center.

Here "center" means the center of [each of] the four channel-wheels (or five), referring to the practice in which one trains in the coming and going of the "moon"—[white] bodhichitta—through those channel-wheels. Those lines therefore represent the second and third esoteric instructions, taught in those terms because [these esoteric instructions] concern the coming and going of the winds and vital essences in the central channel.

Moreover, [the same text] says:¹⁴

Imagine it in the center of the abode
Of the supreme syllable.

This refers to the attainment of unchanging bliss from the melting [of vital essence]; that is to say, the result of those [practices manifests as] the four descending levels of joy.

If [the above quotations] are applied to the female-emissary path, the lines that begin

With vowels and consonants . . .

refer to the purification of the winds. The lines that begin

With the sphere of the moon . . .

represent the esoteric instructions on the main practice, that is, the descent and reversal [of the white bodhichitta]. The lines that end with

. . . the supreme syllable.

mean the same as for the yoga path.

The second [aspect of the Luipa tradition] is that of the completion phase that brings about mastery of awakened qualities (the result). Once the effects of the above esoteric instructions have been fully achieved, [the next step is] as stated in [Luipa's] text:¹⁵

Meditate on the vajra deity body:
Awakened body, speech, and mind.

Accordingly, one will attain the immediate vajra body that resembles the eight magic images.¹⁶ Moreover, [the same text] says:¹⁷

That [deity] transcends form.
It is mind itself, immaterial.
Contemplate mind itself.¹⁸

This means that, with the attainment of the gathering of female emissaries,¹⁹ and relying on either the elaborate or the unelaborate forms of the general and specific deliberate behavior of awareness,²⁰ one repeatedly purifies the body of the deity—[infinite] like space—in luminous-clarity emptiness. As a result of that, on the basis of the proximate cause²¹ of the actual awakenings, one manifests nonconceptual pristine awareness, [the attainment of] the path of seeing. Further, [Luipa's text] states:²²

If one were to contemplate the inconceivable
One would then achieve [the yoga of] retention.

The staff is explained to be the deity's body,
 And the sound of the *damaru*, wisdom.
 The victorious hero possessed [of qualities]
 Is the daytime; the yogini, the nighttime.²³

The heroes are manifestations of transcendence;
 The six[ty goddesses], emanations of mind.²⁴
 The form of Varahi is explained to be
 An emanation of true reality, the pure.

Shri is nondual pristine awareness;
He, emptiness, such as that of cause;
Ru, being devoid of collections;
Ka, not abiding in any place at all.²⁵

That refers to the stage of union,²⁶ at which stage the three [results]—the body [of the deity], luminous clarity, and their union—arise from the natural energy of nonconceptual bliss and emptiness. Therefore, one does not need to depend upon a point of reference as in conceptual meditation. However, if beginners wish to meditate in a way that involves deliberate imagination, in the esoteric instructions of the great yoga of relaxation, the deliberate creation of those three [the deity's body, luminous clarity, and their union] is the meditation itself.

The above words from [Luipa's] text are [used] by Lwabapa, Krishna,²⁷ and others in elucidating the completion-phase teachings. In the esoteric instructions derived from the words of glorious Dipamkarashrijnana [Atisha],²⁸ it is said:²⁹

Those who wish to enter the completion phase [should know]:

The moon is the female-emissary path,
 And the sun, the mandala of the body.
 The four vital essences are pristine awareness.
 The utterly pure is luminous clarity,
 Whose characteristic is like that of space.
 The absence of an inherent nature is the union,
 Explained using three types of examples.³⁰
 The creation phase and completion phase
 Are adopted by the yogin as the path.

That is a supremely eloquent encapsulation of the completion phase according to this tradition based on the sadhana of the great master Luipa.

THE TRADITION OF GHANTAPA [b']

**Ghantapa's tradition comprises five stages:
Self-consecration, vajra-cross, filling the jewel,
Jalandhara, and that of the inconceivable.**

The outstanding master Vajraghantapa,³¹ relying on the *Abhidhana Uttaratantra*,³² the explanatory tantra on the definitive meaning concealed in the *Chakrasamvara Root Tantra*,³³ composed a work on the five stages and their blessing [i.e., the initiation rite].³⁴ Countless persons in India and Tibet became accomplished adepts on the basis of that tradition. Even up to the present time, there has been an uninterrupted [stream of] realizations from its attainment. This marvelous completion phase comprises five stages.

The first stage is introduced [in Ghantapa's *Five Stages of Chakrasamvara*]:³⁵

Always present in one's heart
The single vital essence is unchanging.
For the person who meditates on it
Pristine awareness swiftly dawns.

That passage concerns the stage of self-consecration, which consists of two aspects: self-consecration with seed-syllable; and self-consecration without seed-syllable.³⁶

Similarly, the words of the text successively teach [the other stages]. The second, the vajra-cross stage, consists of three aspects: vajra-cross with seed-syllable; vajra-cross with different forms; and vajra-cross without seed-syllable.³⁷

The third, the stage of filling the jewel, consists of four aspects: training in the action seal; training in the hand seal; training in the phenomena seal; and training in the great seal.³⁸

The fourth, the Jalandhara stage, consists of the single practice of the blazing and dripping.³⁹

The fifth, the stage of the inconceivable, comprises two aspects: mind

entering emptiness; and emptiness entering mind.⁴⁰ This fifth stage consists of meditation on emptiness with bliss as its precondition. The Jalandhara stage is the meditation on bliss with emptiness as its precondition, [experienced] as a result of halting the winds. Nevertheless, it is generally through the stage of the inconceivable that [the state of] union is perfected.

To be more precise, the first four of the five stages, self-consecration and the others, constitute the method for purifying the channels, winds, and vital essences through the yogas of winds, vital essences, and inner fire, and then entering luminous clarity. For that, one repeatedly dissolves the universe and its inhabitants into luminous clarity by means of [the contemplation of] successive destruction. One thereby enters luminous clarity just as in the process of death. For that to occur, one must generate the four joys of the molten vital essence. [To accomplish that,] one binds the right and left winds in the central channel, which causes the inner fire to blaze, which in turn causes the vital essence to melt and the four joys [to arise]. This is the effect of the Jalandhara stage [the fourth stage], which is also called “maintaining the blaze” because of the blazing of the inner fire.⁴¹

Prior to that [Jalandhara stage] is the generation of the four joys by relying on practice with a seal, which actually constitutes the [third] stage, [called] filling the jewel. For this stage, four seals are taught: The pledge seal is the generation of joy using an imagined pristine-awareness seal. This seal serves as a preliminary to the others. The action seal, the generation of bliss using an actual awareness female, forms the main practice. The phenomena seal, preserving bliss by bringing to mind what was previously experienced, forms the concluding practice. The great seal is meditation on essential reality after one has practiced the other [seals]. Here, as stated above, the reversal of the order of the pledge and the action seals is [in keeping with] what was taught by the Great Jetsun.⁴²

Prior to the filling-the-jewel stage is the second stage, that of the vajra-cross, the vital-essence yoga.

Prior to the vajra-cross stage is [the first stage,] self-consecration. The self-consecration without seed-syllable is the wind yoga. Once the winds and vital essences have become workable as a result of those two yogas [the vital-essence yoga and the wind yoga], one is then capable of applying seal [practices]; hence, [those yogas must precede the third stage]. Self-consecration with a seed-syllable is the method by which one forcefully focuses the mind upon the vital essences at the heart and other [channel-wheels].

Thus, by means of the creation phase as the preliminary practice, one

fixes the mind—which [normally] flows toward the five [types of sensory] objects—on the vital essence at the heart. Once the mind is settled there, one gains stability in [the practices of] wind yoga, the focus of which is the coming and going [of the breath] at the tip of the nose, and the yoga of vital essence, the focuses of which are the vital essences at the centers of the four channel-wheels. Then, relying on both outer and inner seals,⁴³ [one cultivates] the four joys [that arise] from molten vital essence. Once one has gained mastery [of the four joys], one repeatedly dissolves the universe and its inhabitants into luminous clarity and makes them reappear. As a result of that, one attains the body of nondual pristine awareness: this is enlightenment.

To summarize, the first stage brings about a stable manifestation of the great-bliss vital essence, the support [vital essence] and the supported [great bliss], in the middle of the central channel at the four channel-wheels.

The second stage halts the ordinary movement of [the upper and lower] winds in the left and right channels and strikes the crucial point in the coming and going of that vital essence [of great bliss].

The third stage is the application to the four seals so that the vital essence will melt and [its pure essence] increase.

The fourth stage binds that vital essence so that it is not emitted, thus manifesting the four ascending innate joys.

The fifth stage is [meditation in which] the resident [deities] and residence [mandala] that have been made manifest are repeatedly dissolved into luminous clarity and made to reappear, at the end of which the illusory body, the inseparability of utterly purified wind and mind, is attained.

These stages were described in that way by Lord Mikyö Dorjé.⁴⁴

Some Tibetan masters of the past explained the five stages as [successive] methods to attain the special body of great bliss. [According to their descriptions,] the first stage includes only as far as the seed-syllable aspect. The second stage includes only as far as the insignia arising from the seed-syllable. The third stage is the method to manifest the entire body [of the deity] from the insignia. The fourth stage is the completion phase that arises from innate joy, the method to actualize the body of pristine awareness. The fifth is the method by which that body is dissolved into inconceivable luminous clarity and made manifest as a body of form [that requires] no more training.

THE TRADITION OF KRISHNA [c']

Charyadharapada taught common aspects (training in the creation phase
 And in the view's crucial points) and uncommon aspects (the yoga path
 And the female-emissary path). The yoga path consists of four stages:
 The tantra stage of the root; inner-fire mantra stage with equal emphasis;
 Pristine-awareness stage of vital essence; and secret stage of the result.
 Those aspects are used as the path; twelve branch practices were taught.

[Next is discussed] the completion phase formulated by Charyadharendrapada [Krishnacharya].⁴⁵ This accomplished master, possessed of many qualities, was prophesied by the Buddha. His [Chakrasamvara] completion phase is formed of four stages.⁴⁶

[This completion phase consists of a common yoga and an uncommon yoga.] First one trains in the common yoga, which involves two aspects: the common-yoga training in the crucial points of the creation-phase esoteric instructions, [which means] to embark on mantra's own path; [and training in the crucial points of the esoteric instructions on the view that eliminates deviations common to all paths and leads one to freedom's gateway]. [The first training has two parts:] training in the yoga of imaginative meditation by means of the branches of the creation phase, inclusive of nine yogas;⁴⁷ and training in the yoga of actual meditation, inclusive of the twelve crucial points of the esoteric instructions.⁴⁸ Following those is [the second training] in which certainty is gained through the twelve crucial points of the esoteric instructions on the view that eliminates all possibilities of deviation and leads to freedom's gateway.⁴⁹

Following that is [the training in] the uncommon [yoga of] the completion phase, which comprises two practices: the path of yoga; and the path of the female emissary.

The yoga path is formed of four stages: tantra, mantra, pristine awareness, and secret.

The tantra stage concerns the root. This aspect is a root yoga that serves

as the foundation for all focuses of meditation, the esoteric instructions for which treat the tantric stages only.⁵⁰

The mantra stage concerns the practice. This aspect is the inner-fire yoga, the esoteric instructions for which [emphasize] channels, winds, and vital essences equally.⁵¹

The stage of pristine awareness concerns what arises (the four joys). This aspect is the yoga of vital essence whose descent in the forward order gives rise to the four joys.⁵²

The secret stage concerns the result. This aspect is the training in entering and arising from luminous clarity, based on complete mastery of reversal [of the vital essence] and blazing and dripping.⁵³

Those [four] aspects⁵⁴ are used as the path. That being said, to complete the four-stage path in its entirety is accomplished by means of the inner fire alone. Therefore, in some texts the path [of yoga] is called the “complete path of inner fire” or “taking up inner fire as path.” In those expressions, the term “inner fire” is being given a broad meaning and is used as a general term for the completion phase. However, in its narrower sense, this is a general term applied to a specific [aspect]. It refers to the inner-fire focal points, the principal of which is the fourth channel-wheel [that of the navel]. That is stated clearly and extensively in the *Mahasamvarodaya Tantra*, the *Vajradaka Tantra*, and the *Samputa Tilaka Tantra*.

[Charyadharendrapada] taught twelve crucial points of esoteric instructions [related to] the branches of visualization for the [above] aspects—three concerned with winds, three with nonconceptuality, three with vital essences, and three with inner fire.⁵⁵

[The second] practice is the path of the female emissary. Apart from the substitution of the female-emissary path for inner fire, in this path all the root esoteric instructions are similar to those of the yoga path. In the main practice, [one applies] twelve crucial-point esoteric instructions.⁵⁶

The concluding practice concerns the elimination of impediments by means of the two types of equalizing, the four syllables, the six armors; and the enhancement [of the practice] by means of three [types of] conducts, thereby attaining the result.⁵⁷

On [the subject of] that [path], this great accomplished master [Krishnacharya] composed the *Illumination of the Secret Essential Principles*.⁵⁸ [This work sets forth] the completion phase of the highest yoga [tantras] in general since the father-tantra Guhyasamaja and the mother-tantra Chakrasamvara, although differing in terms of the descriptions, are the

same in having these four stages as their subject matter. Moreover, Krishnacharya composed the *Four Stages*. [This work sets forth] the completion phase of mother tantras in general since the Hevajra and Chakrasamvara, although differing in terms of the descriptions, are the same in having these four stages as their subject matter. His formulation of a completion phase unique to the Chakrasamvara tantra is that of the *Vital Essence of Spring*.⁵⁹ The sixth examination [section] of the *Samputa Tantra* states:⁶⁰

The lotus within the heart
Has eight petals and a center.
The channel within the lotus,
Has a flame as its nature.

[The channel] hangs face downward
Like the plantain tree's flower.
Within it resides the hero,
The size of a mustard seed.

The invincible *hum*, the seed,
Is what drips like melting snow.
It gladdens all creatures' hearts,
And thus is known as "spring."

The Mare's fire, due to its great form,⁶¹
Is called Selfless Female, "vital essence."⁶²

"Spring" [means] the bodhichitta present in the *hum* at the heart; and [red] "vital essence," the *am* at the navel. That passage speaks of the method of cultivating the completion phase in which spring and vital essence form a union.

One tradition [of this completion phase] comprises the four stages that belong to the nine cycles of the path, transmitted through Drokmi [Lot-sawa].⁶³ A second is that of the tradition of the ultimate secret of Naropa's lineage.⁶⁴ Of those two, the Naropa tradition is especially distinguished and one that is very widely known. The lineage of the venerable Sakyapa⁶⁵ and that of Purang Lochung's student, Mar Chögyal,⁶⁶ are both the pure tradition of Naropa.

According to Jetsun Drakpa⁶⁷ and others, Krishna composed six

completion-phase synopses: the basic synopsis, [called] *Vital Essence of Spring*; the synopsis of words, *Secret Essential Principle*; the synopsis of realizations, *Olapati*; the synopsis of meanings, *Epitome*; the synopsis of vital essences and seals, *Great Seal*; and the synopsis of levels [of awakening], *Secret Stages*. The heart, so to speak, of those six is the *Olapati*. The quintessence of its esoteric instructions lies in the complete path of inner fire.⁶⁸

The view [taught by] the master [Krishnacharya] is termed “beginningless and endless pure awareness (bodhichitta), the true reality, utterly free from the four extremes.”⁶⁹ As the means or path for realizing this view, he taught four stages (or five).

10. MOTHER TANTRA SYSTEMS: CHATUHPITHA, MAHAMAYA, BUDDHAKAPALA, AND TARA YOGINI

- dd. The Vajra Chatuhpitha Completion Phase [II.B.2.c.ii.dd]
 - ee. The Mahamaya Completion Phase
 - ff. The Buddhakapala Completion Phase
 - gg. The Tara Yogini Completion Phase
 - iii. An Encapsulation of the Systems [II.B.2.c.iii]
-

[This chapter continues the presentation of completion-phase systems in highest yoga mother tantras. What follow now are parts four, five, six, and seven: the Vajra Chatuhpitha completion phase; the Mahamaya completion phase; the Buddhakapala completion phase; and the Tara Yogini completion phase. This chapter concludes with an encapsulation of the systems.]

THE VAJRA CHATUHPITHA COMPLETION PHASE [dd]

The Chatuhpitha completion phase includes an uncommon
creation phase

In which bliss and emptiness are mutually sealed, and a
completion phase

Whose preliminary includes blocking the gateways and vajra
recitation.

In its main practice, the pervading aspect consists of two yogas:

**The inconceivable and the action seal; the pervaded aspect
comprises
Four root instructions (like a bull's hoof, like a cow's udder, a
bunch
Of plantain bananas, and a stupa-vase); and branch instructions.**

The completion phase of the Chatuhpitha ["Four Seats"] tantra¹ includes an uncommon creation phase containing the esoteric instructions of the cow's udder, based on the nose-tip at the secret place and the nose-tip at the crown or the mid-eyebrow point. By cultivating this creation phase in conjunction with wind yoga, the deity's body is sealed with bliss, and bliss is sealed with emptiness. The clarity of appearance [of the deity] is thereby enhanced.²

The preliminary to all aspects of [this] completion phase entails closing off the nine gateways and performing the vajra recitation.³ One thereby purifies the channel pathways.

The main practice of the completion phase comprises two key elements: that of the pervading completion phase; and that of the pervaded completion phase.

The first, the pervading completion phase, consists of two yogas: the yoga of the essential instructions on the inconceivable; and the action-seal yoga involving passion. The first, also referred to as the "yoga directed toward ultimate reality," elicits bliss-emptiness: on the basis of vital essence (the elicitor), [one experiences] ineffable bliss-emptiness (what is elicited). The second, the action-seal yoga involving passion, is essentially the same as the secret fire offering.⁴

The pervaded completion phase⁵ consists of both the root of the path and the branch aspects. The root⁶ comprises four essential instructions: like a bull's hoof; like a cow's udder; like a bunch of plantain bananas; and like a stupa-vase. The first, the bull's hoof, has four focuses: the thirteen syllables, the two syllables, the single syllable, and the sphere alone.⁷ [The second, the cow's udder, is a single cycle of visualization.]⁸ The third, the bunch of plantain bananas, comprises three esoteric instructions: the thirteen syllables, the nine syllables, and the bird's egg.⁹ The fourth, the stupa-vase, has two aspects: binding the winds; and making the winds dissolve.¹⁰

[Those root instructions] all have branch aspects. The branches of the bull's hoof are miscellaneous esoteric instructions.¹¹ The branches of the cow's udder concern practices related to fire.¹² The branches of the bunch

of plantain bananas concern upward transference [of consciousness] and the accessory practices [of entering the deceased, etc.].¹³ The branches of the vase of the stupa concern the triad of illusions.¹⁴

All the above aspects constitute the completion phase as taught in the *Vajra Chatuhpitha Tantra*. There are two approaches to this completion phase: an approach that cuts through intellectual [formulations]; and an integrated approach.

In the first approach, one begins by cultivating the creation phase. Then, one uses the two pervading yogas to enhance and sustain a single technique alone—any one of the four pervaded [completion-phase instructions].¹⁵ By means of that, one gives rise to the pristine awareness of warmth.¹⁶ Finally, with tantric conduct and the proximate cause [of the outer and inner actual awakenings] providing the connection, one comes to attain the result. This is a system whereby one individual need not apply all four of the pervaded techniques together as an integrated approach.

In the second approach, all four esoteric instructions for the pervaded completion phase are combined as requisite elements for any single individual. By means of the bull's hoof instructions, one halts the winds in the central channel. By means of the cow's udder, one ignites the coarse inner fire and gives rise to blazing and dripping [from which are experienced] the warmth and bliss from the descent of [white] bodhichitta. By means of the bunch of plantain bananas, one first loosens the channel-knots, then opens them, and finally releases them. By means of the stupa-vase, one causes the subtle and coarse elements, in succession, to dissolve into the blissful vital essence within the central channel. That [experience]—the pristine awareness that is bliss and emptiness—is called luminous clarity.

The esoteric instructions [called] coiled king of the *nagas* are included within those four.¹⁷ As to the meanings of the names given to these [instructions], the names used are based on the forms of the channels, places in the body, and focuses of meditation.¹⁸

As to how those [four instructions] are presented in the tantra,¹⁹ the true nature [of reality] is conclusively established in the latter part of the third chapter on the seat of oneself and the first part of the fourth [chapter]. In many other sections are explained various completion-phase [practices involving] winds.

The fourth [chapter] on the seat of application contains the cycles of teachings concerning the seal of another's body.

The second chapter on the seat of the secret treats the stage of the incon-

ceivable;²⁰ the subtle and vital-essence [yogas] of the creation phase (consisting of esoteric instructions on the [sphere of] vital essence at the [tip of] the sex organ, the vital essence at the mid-eyebrow point, and the vital essence at the heart); the closing of the gateways shared [by the creation and completion phases]; the actual cow's-udder completion phase; the bull's-hoof thirteen-syllable, two-syllable, and single-syllable [practices]; the gaining of [the ability] to know others' minds; and the fire-offering rite of the ultimate reality.²¹

The third chapter [on the seat of the secret] presents esoteric instructions on the egg-born; the plantain-flower²² thirteen-syllable [practice]; the upward transference [of consciousness]; entering the deceased; and its branches.

The fourth chapter [on the seat of the secret] teaches the bunch-of-plantain-bananas nine-syllable [practice]; the stupa-vase's branches of binding the winds; the stupa esoteric instructions; the stupa-vase's main [practice of] nine syllables; and the yoga of the three illusions.

[That explains] how those instructions are related to the *Root Tantra*.

In the *Explanatory Tantra*,²³ the chapters on the seat of application teach various kinds of practices—such as the secret fire-offering and the plantain flower—that differ slightly from the *Root Tantra*. [The *Explanatory Tantra*] presents numerous other [topics], the qualifications of a seal, and so forth.

The *Mantramsha Explanatory Tantra*²⁴ sets forth the esoteric instructions of the *om* syllable, the arrow-shot inner fire, other variations of plantain-flower [instructions], the conduct of deliberate behavior, and so forth.

Lord Nagarjuna's *Practice of the Armpit*²⁵ and Aryadeva's *Single Tree Commentary on Difficult Points and Explanation of the Eight Topics Applied to the Inner Meaning*²⁶ are among the very few²⁷ Indian texts that treat this completion phase [of Chatuhpitha] that were introduced into Tibet.

Jetari's *Four Essential Principles*²⁸ and other commentaries contain various miscellaneous presentations of this completion phase. The root source for Tibetan literature [on this completion phase] lies in the *Mother and Son Notes*²⁹ of Ngokpa and his students.³⁰

THE MAHAMAYA COMPLETION PHASE [ee]

The Mahamaya comprises the lesser yoga of shape, the profound
 mantra yoga,
 The ultimate yoga of reality, and the auxiliary practice of the
 triad of illusions—
 Those of daytime experiences, dreams, and the intermediate
 state.

[What follows next is] the completion phase as taught in the *Mahamaya Tantra*,³¹ or *Great Illusion Tantra*. This formulation derives from the tradition of the lords Marpa and Ngoktön³² and comprises four essential instructions: the yoga of shape (the lesser); the yoga of mantra (the profound); [the yoga of reality (the ultimate)];³³ and [the practice] related to the triad of illusions (an auxiliary teaching).

The first, the yoga of shape, consists of extensive and simplified creation-phase meditations as the bases for the completion phase.³⁴ The actual completion phase corresponds to the subsequent practices [the second, third, and fourth essential instructions].

The second, the yoga of mantra, comprises two yogas, namely, the mantra yoga of the upper door and the mantra yoga of the lower door. The first has three aspects: the mantra yoga of channel-wheels; the mantra yoga of vital essences; and the mantra yoga of the subtle. The first of those, the mantra yoga of channel-wheels, has three aspects: the one-channel-wheel practice; two-channel-wheel practice; and four-channel-wheel practice.³⁵ [The second], the mantra yoga of vital essences, also has three aspects: focusing on the upper nose-tip; focusing on the lower nose-tip; and focusing on the center of the body.³⁶ [The third], the mantra yoga of the subtle, consists of three aspects: training in the natural flow of the winds; training in counting the numbers [of breaths]; and training in the vase[-shaped] holding.³⁷

[The third,] the yoga of reality, comprises a common practice and an uncommon one. Both practices include the two aspects of using the natural state as the path and using appearances as the path.³⁸

[The fourth,] [the practice] related to the triad of illusions—those of daytime experiences, dreams, and the intermediate state—is presented as an auxiliary teaching.³⁹

While [those four sets] constitute the central course of instruction, there

are, in addition, miscellaneous completion-phase instructions, [known as] the six oral essential instructions and the six collections of activation rites based on meditative absorption.⁴⁰ Each of those [two sets] has esoteric instructions for the creation phase and the completion phase. Moreover, [the *Mahamaya Tantra*] states:⁴¹

The activities relating to another person's corpse, and so on...

from which are derived teachings on both transference [of consciousness] and entering the deceased as found in the mixing and transference [instructions].⁴²

At the present time, to carry out the practice related to the triad of illusions would mean the beginner's [practice of the] illusory body and luminous clarity, on the basis of which the yogic experiences of illusory body and luminous clarity arise.

As to the ways these [practices of the completion phase] are related to the [root] tantra, the essential instructions for the mantra yoga of channel-wheels are expressed in the six lines beginning with

Having equalized the vowels and consonants....⁴³

The essential instructions for the mantra yoga of vital essences at both the upper and lower [doors] begin with

Garlands of excellent syllables....⁴⁴

The essential instructions for the meditation on the vital essence in the center of the body begin with

Through the light that has awakened in the sphere....⁴⁵

The essential instructions for all that is related to vajra recitation begin with

By means of the application of the first syllable....⁴⁶

The essential instructions for the gradational practice of halting [the winds] by means of the vase-shaped holding [of the breath] begin with

Exhalation and inhalation are halted....⁴⁷

The essential instructions for the forceful practice of halting [the winds] begin with

Two eyes and....⁴⁸

The essential instructions for the yoga of reality begin with

Through whatever path of the senses....⁴⁹

The essential instructions related to the triad of illusions begin with

Fully endowed with the sleep yoga...⁵⁰

and continue

Accordingly, the supreme three dimensions are bestowed....⁵¹

The yoga of shape [i.e., the form of the deity] is extensively taught in all three chapters [of this tantra]. The yoga of mantra focused on the lower door is taught a number of times, [found] at various points within the three chapters.

In all contexts of the practice—beginning, middle, and end—it is absolutely required that every practitioner carry out the ultimate yoga of reality, and at appropriate times, the yoga of mantra focused on the lower door. Moreover, each person must definitely cultivate one—whichever is suitable—of the many mantra yogas focused on the upper door. However, it is not necessarily the case that one individual must definitely meditate on all of them. The practice of even just one of these carried out with great diligence over a long period of time can bring about the realization of lesser warmth. Then, the practice of the yoga focused on the lower door can lead to the great warmth and peak [stages of the path of preparation].⁵²

As has been explained, all these yogas may be approached either in an integrated way or in a way that cuts through intellectual [formulations]. In the case of the first, all practices need to be combined as requisite elements for any one individual. In the case of the second, even a single practice such

as the mantra yoga focused on the channel-wheels will bring about the accomplishment of the particular aims.

THE BUDDHAKAPALA COMPLETION PHASE [ff]

The Buddhakapala system comprises practice with a focus that entails

Subtle wind yoga, vital-essence yoga with body as method, and enhancement ways;

And practice without a focus, which involves the branches of withdrawal

And absorption, plus the other four branches, which arise as their results.

The completion phase of the Buddhakapala⁵³ belongs to the lineage derived from the oral teachings of Saraha,⁵⁴ the ancestor of all accomplished masters. It is a system comprising two practices, one with a focus and one without a focus.

The first, the completion phase with a focus, consists of four [aspects of] training. [First is] the yoga of the subtle in which are applied the four wind techniques, such as the finest particle.⁵⁵ [The second is] the vital-essence yoga of the inner-fire practice, in conjunction with vajra recitation, for which one's own body [is used as] method.⁵⁶ [The third is] the class of techniques for the enhancement of bliss and warmth. This yoga entails gathering the winds at the entrance to the central channel, opening the entrance to the central channel, and applying a forceful method.⁵⁷ [The fourth,] practiced once one has gained proficiency in the previous, is the vital-essence yoga with a focus, using the body of another person, a wisdom woman.

The second, practice without a focus, the nonconceptual completion phase, consists of six branches. The first [branch], practiced once one has trained in the previous completion phase with a focus, [is] the yoga of withdrawal. [The second is] the yoga of meditative absorption.⁵⁸ These two yogas are carried out for a considerable length of time, the results of which are the arisings of the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth branches. [The third branch,] that of yoga [to exert control] over the winds, is to stop the winds [from flowing] in the right channel and left channel and make them enter the central channel. [The fourth,] retention, [is to cause] the winds that

have entered the central channel to dissolve into vital essences in the centers of the individual channel-wheels. [The fifth,] recollection, is to elicit the bliss of melting by way of the seal of empty form.⁵⁹ [The sixth,] contemplation, [begins] at the first instant of the arising of the pristine awareness of changeless bliss.

It is taught that single-minded perseverance in the subtle yoga and vital-essence yoga [mentioned] above will bring about various experiences of bliss and warmth. This will greatly enhance completion-phase meditation that has no focus. When one has cultivated the practice without a focus, that meditative stream with focus will also develop into a nonconceptual completion phase. Even the practices of the subtle and vital-essence yogas by themselves—if carried out for long periods of time—first naturally [lead to] the mind becoming utterly still and various experiences of bliss arising. Then, before long, the supreme contemplation of bliss and emptiness will manifest by itself.

Marpa and Ngoktön's instruction lineage for the completion phase [related] to the *Buddhakapala Tantra* and its commentaries no longer exists. This explanation has been given in accordance with the new extended tradition of the Venerable Master of Jonang [Taranatha], who received the transmission of the great adept Shantigupta's tradition.⁶⁰

THE TARA YOGINI COMPLETION PHASE [gg]

The Tara Tantra: Origin of All Rites teaches four yogas:
 The first yoga is the creation phase and its related aspects;
 The subsequent yoga has both preliminary and main practices;
 And the great yoga contains the three indestructibles.

[Next is presented] the completion phase taught in *The Ultimate Essence of Tara, Origin of All Rites, King of Yogini Tantras*.⁶¹ This system consists of the stages of four yogas.⁶²

The first yoga comprises a creation phase and its related aspects.⁶³ Practices belonging specifically to the completion phase set forth in the tantra—known as the yoga of burning away negative karma,⁶⁴ that of averting obstacles,⁶⁵ and that through which blessing enters oneself⁶⁶—constitute this creation phase. This precedes the actual phase of completion, which consists of three yogas, namely, subsequent yoga, surpassing yoga, and great yoga.

The subsequent yoga has a preliminary practice, that of the contemplation of calm abiding; a main practice of remaining in the equipoise of naturally pure reality; and an enhancement practice that is carried out by means of the nine methods of the retention mantras, syllable *a*, and so forth,⁶⁷ and by means of the yoga for defeating demonic forces, which is the elimination of unfavorable factors.⁶⁸

The surpassing yoga has a preliminary practice of purification of the channel pathways⁶⁹ through the five wind techniques (filling, expelling, etc.);⁷⁰ and a main practice in which the pristine awareness of the four joys is stabilized through the actions of the five syllables.⁷¹

The great yoga has three parts—the yoga of indestructible body; the yoga of indestructible speech; and the yoga of indestructible mind—by means of which body, speech, and mind are realized as the vajras [of awakened body, speech, and mind].⁷²

To elaborate [on those four yogas], the first yoga is the gaining of some degree of stability in the creation phase.

The subsequent yoga brings forth some experience of the [authentic] view.

The surpassing yoga [requires] one to have purified the channel pathways⁷³ by means of wind yoga. One then enters the main practice, that of the female-emissary path, as stated in the tantra:⁷⁴

In this [yoga], one first purifies [the channels] using the techniques of filling, pressing down, stilling, and holding [the breath as if in] a vase. Then one enters practice with females. In that way, it is said, one will attain [supreme] power by means of this [lifetime's] body itself.

On the basis of the sixty-four acts that arouse⁷⁵ and the wind yogas previously practiced, one meditates sequentially upon descent, retention, reversal, and spread [of vital essence];⁷⁶ and upon transforming it into pristine awareness. Following that, one relies on the body of another, primarily that of an action seal, but one may also rely on a pristine-awareness seal as a branch practice,⁷⁷ and in that way one cultivates the pristine awareness that is bliss and emptiness.

[The last,] the great yoga, [requires that] one gain some familiarity with [the yoga] consisting of three indestructibles. Then, by means of the functioning of the channel known as *prajna-naranasika*, one releases first the

bliss-sustaining channel-wheel, then the emanation channel-wheel, and finally the channel-wheel of great bliss. Following that is the practice to crack the egg of ignorance in the heart, whereby one reaches [the stage of] supreme luminous clarity.⁷⁸

AN ENCAPSULATION OF THE SYSTEMS [iii]

These are primarily mother-tantra systems. There are many minor ones.

The tradition that emphasizes the tantras is that of Indian scholars and adepts.

The completion-phase systems as described above are the ones that became widely known in both India and Tibet. In particular, these completion-phase practices—primarily of the [highest] yoga mother tantras—form unbroken [traditions] whose experiences, instructions, and practices are present even today throughout the Himalayan region.

Only Vajradhara Buddha himself could possibly fathom those completion-phase [systems], along with all the other minor ones—some of which are clearly set forth in the decisive words of tantras and others definitively formulated in the esoteric instructions of accomplished masters. They are so numerous as to defy comprehension or description.

Two kinds of completion phase are generally spoken of: a completion phase based mainly on the tantras; and a completion phase based mainly on esoteric instructions. What has just been presented is the former kind—a magnificent tradition composed of teachings explicitly set forth in the tantras. It was cherished by the scholars and adepts of India who achieved total realization [by relying] on it.

11. THE KEY ELEMENTS

- d. The Key Elements That Epitomize the Completion Phase [II.B.2.d]
 - i. The Reasons Why the Key Elements Are Required
 - ii. An Enumeration of the Key Elements
 - iii. A Detailed Description of the Three Key Elements
 - aa. The Relative: The Completion Phase of Self-Consecration
 - 1' The Preamble
 - 2' The Detailed Exposition
 - a' Inner Fire
 - i' The Yoga of Inner Fire
 - ii' Four Interpretations
 - b' The Illusory Body
 - i' Four Interpretations
 - aa' The Illusory Body in Its Literal Sense
 - bb' The Illusory Body in Its General Sense
 - cc' The Illusory Body in Its Hidden Sense
 - dd' The Ultimate Illusory Body
 - ii' A Related Point

[This chapter presents] part four [of the subject of meditation in the phase of completion]: the key elements that epitomize the completion phase. This section has three parts: the reasons why the key elements [are required]; [enumerating] what the key elements are; and describing in detail the characteristics of three key elements.

THE REASONS WHY THE KEY ELEMENTS ARE REQUIRED [i]

All those systems share the key elements of requiring cultivation
of the union
With training as direct cause for attaining the goal of union
beyond training;
And requiring that the illusory body be dissolved and made to
reappear;
And for that, the key elements of requiring cultivation of both
the relative,
Self-consecration, and the ultimate, luminous clarity; and for
those,
Requiring that the channels, winds, and vital essences be made
workable.

There are many completion-phase systems presented in the individual sets of tantras. All of those systems, however, share [several] key elements.

One such element is the requirement to cultivate the union of the training [stage], which is the direct cause for the attainment of the goal of union beyond training, the body of pristine awareness. To do that requires one to cultivate [the practice whereby] the illusion-like body of the deity is dissolved into luminous clarity and then made to reappear as the union [that requires training].

In order for one to carry out the dissolution and reappearance [of the deity], all systems share the key elements of requiring [cultivation of] both the relative [aspect], the completion phase of self-consecration, and the ultimate, the completion phase of luminous clarity. In order to practice those two [aspects of] the completion phase, all systems share the key element of requiring one to have made the channels, winds, and vital essences workable.

Although all systems have those key elements in common, their respective ways of putting them into practice differ to some extent. Father-tantra practitioners first rely on the three types of isolation¹ and then cultivate union through the stages of the illusory body and luminous clarity. Mother-tantra practitioners first rely on the yogas of channels, winds, and vital essences and then cultivate union through the stages of innate bliss and emptiness.

Those methods can also be divided into subparts that form a collection of many traditions of practice. Thus, there is not precisely one single way.

AN ENUMERATION OF THE KEY ELEMENTS [ii]

All completion-phase systems can therefore be contained in three key elements:

The body of oneself, to strike the crucial point related to the central channel;

The body of another, to elicit and stabilize the pristine awareness of the four joys;

And the great seal of empty form. However, in consideration of people today,

Three key elements—the relative, the ultimate, and their inseparability—are taught.

For those reasons [given above], [certain key elements are required]. All aspects of the entire completion-phase system in highest yoga tantra are contained in the following three [key elements]:

[The first is] practice that relies on one's own body as method. [In this,] one strikes the crucial point [related] to the central channel by making [winds] enter, abide, and dissolve [in it].

[The second is] practice that relies on the body of another person as the wisdom [aspect]. [In this,] one elicits and stabilizes the pristine awareness of the four joys.

[The third is] practice that relies on the great seal of empty form. [In this,] one cultivates the emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects and unchanging bliss.

One needs no more than these three. Just one of them on its own, however, cannot bring about the final completion of the path. One therefore needs to practice the three together.

Nevertheless, people today are deficient in antidotes and weak in perseverance. They therefore lack the capacity to fully comprehend those elements exactly as they are. For that reason, [practices] such as [those that require] the body of another have been put aside for the time being, and in consideration of present circumstances, Tibetan masters of supreme insight teach the completion phase in a condensed form consisting of three

[key elements]: the relative, the ultimate, and their inseparability. These three ultimate elements have superseded the previous three.

A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE THREE KEY ELEMENTS [iii]

This section has three parts: the relative [element], the completion phase of self-consecration; the ultimate, the completion phase of the great seal of luminous clarity; and the inseparability of the relative and the ultimate, the completion phase of the union.

THE RELATIVE: THE COMPLETION PHASE OF SELF-CONSECRATION [aa]

This is discussed in two parts: a preamble; and a detailed exposition.

THE PREAMBLE [1']

The relative aspect, the self-consecration completion phase, is twofold.

The completion phase of self-consecration, which strikes the crucial point with respect to the relative aspect, is discussed in two parts: inner fire and the illusory body.

THE DETAILED EXPOSITION [2']

This comprises two topics: inner fire; and the illusory body.

INNER FIRE [a']

This section has two parts: the yoga of inner fire; and its divisions according to four interpretations.

THE YOGA OF INNER FIRE [i']

The common system is to make the channels, winds, and vital essences workable

By means of the three isolations; or the empty enclosures, vase
 holding, and so on.
 The uncommon system is to ignite the inner fires of bliss,
 warmth, and no thought
 So that the four joys and four empties manifest in union. From
 that arises
 The pristine awareness of luminous clarity, and the example
 innate and the true.

It is generally required as the first [step] of every completion phase that one make the channels, winds, and vital essences workable. Father-tantra practitioners accomplish that by means of three meditations: body isolation, voice isolation, and mind isolation.

Body isolation is to meditate on the subtle [vital essence] at the lower door; then, by causing the winds to enter and dissolve in the central channel, to give rise to innate bliss from the melting [of the vital essence].

Voice isolation is to cultivate the wind yoga involving the three vital essences at the three nose-tips;² then, by [causing] the winds to dissolve, to give rise to the four empties.³

Mind isolation is to practice the inner and outer methods;⁴ then, by [causing] the winds to dissolve at the heart, to give rise to the special four empties.

In the [common] mother-tantra system, one has to strike the crucial points within the vajra body and then stabilize the arrayed vital essences in order to bring about realization. To stabilize the vital essences, one must gain control over the moving winds. In order to accomplish that, one has to purify the stationary channels.⁵ It is therefore explained that one is to meditate on these three in that order of channels, winds, and vital essences. To explain, once one has first achieved proficiency in the empty enclosures of the body and channels⁶ [and] has perfect adeptness in the fourfold technique of the vase-shaped holding of the winds,⁷ one then makes the vital essences workable through the vital-essence yoga and other techniques.

In the uncommon mother-tantra system, one ignites the inner fire of bliss (the dripping vital essence); the inner fire of warmth (the blazing *a*-stroke);⁸ and the inner fire of no thought (the union).

As a result of igniting the inner fires, and having penetrated the crucial points with respect to the winds, the four joys and the four empties man-

ifest in union: that is the realization of inner fire. The [*Hevajra Tantra*] *Two Examinations* describes the four joys:⁹

The bliss of joy is the slight one.
 Supreme joy is greater than that.
 Joy-free joy¹⁰ is free from desire,
 And the remaining one is innate joy.

As to the way the four joys arise, the four joys of descent occur when the vital-essence fluid descends through the four channel-wheels, beginning with that of the crown. The *Indestructible Garland* states:¹¹

What is called joy arises at the crown
 In the channel-wheel of great bliss;
 Supreme joy, in the enjoyment channel-wheel;
 Joy-free joy, in the phenomena channel-wheel;
 The experience of innate joy is generated¹²
 In the emanation channel-wheel.

The four joys of ascent occur when the vital essence has been stabilized and is then redirected from the genital tip [upward] through the four places, beginning with the navel. The *Indestructible Garland* states:¹³

Joy is present in the emanation channel-wheel;
 Supreme joy, in the channel-wheel of phenomena;
 [Joy]-free joy, in the enjoyment [channel-wheel];
 Innate [joy], in the [channel-wheel] of great bliss:
 Thus taught is what is called the “inverse sequence.”

The main practice for the realization of inner fire concerns the pristine awareness that is the indivisibility of luminous clarity and the bliss of the innate [joy] (the last of the four joys). That [innate joy] is of two kinds: the example-innate [joy], attended by subtle subject-object dualism; and the true innate [joy], free from subject-object dualism.

In general, in the mother-tantra system, self-consecration and the great seal of luminous clarity, as well as their inseparable union, are all derived from inner-fire yoga. Therefore, inner fire is not necessarily the self-consecration completion phase alone. It has been so classed for the time being because it is widely regarded in that way.

FOUR INTERPRETATIONS [ii']

Chandali literally means an agent of fiercely wrathful burning and vanquishing.

The general sense in sutra is the innate; in mantra, bliss, emptiness, and pristine awareness;

The hidden sense means the action, yoga, and innate forms of inner fire;

The ultimate inner fire is luminous clarity, the flame of pristine awareness.

[The Tibetan term for “inner fire” (*gtum mo*) is derived from the Sanskrit term *chandali*.] *Chandali* literally means [a female] who carries out fierce and wrathful actions, such as burning away the impure psychophysical constituents and utterly vanquishing the emotional afflictions. In his *Commentary [Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra]*,¹⁴ Vajragarbha states:

She is called *chandali* because she burns away [impurity].

In his *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Hevajra Tantra*,¹⁵ Saroruha states:

Chandali refers to the agent who obliterates the emotional afflictions of existence.

In his *Commentary on Difficult Points [of the Hevajra Tantra]*, Naropa states:¹⁶

Because she performs fierce [*chandah*] actions
She is referred to as a fierce woman [*chandali*].

As for its general sense, in the sutra way, inner fire means the innate, ineffable emptiness-nature of all phenomena. In the mantra way, inner fire means bliss, emptiness, and their inseparable union [as pristine awareness].

Inner fire in its hidden sense means all [aspects of] the action inner fire, the yoga inner fire, and innate inner fire. The action inner fire is present in the secret place, blazing with warmth during the sexual union of male and female. The yoga inner fire is the *a*-stroke at the navel, which has the

potency, when one strikes the relevant crucial points, to elicit the pristine awareness of the four joys and the four empties. The innate inner fire is innate pristine awareness, which is the all-aspects emptiness and unchanging bliss, manifested through the strength of familiarization with the yogas of the channels, winds, and vital essences.

The ultimate inner fire means the attainment of utterly luminous clarity, the flame of stainless pristine awareness. Such attainment is brought about by means of the inner fire in the literal sense, which cuts through conceptual elaborations; the inner fire in the general sense, which is the practice itself; and inner fire in the hidden sense, which acts as a link [to attainment].

THE ILLUSORY BODY [b']

This section has two parts: its divisions in terms of four interpretations; and a related topic.

FOUR INTERPRETATIONS [i']

This discussion has four parts: the illusory body in its literal sense; the illusory body in its general sense; the illusory body in its hidden sense; and the ultimate illusory body.

THE ILLUSORY BODY IN ITS LITERAL SENSE [aa']

As illustrated by the examples of illusion, everything is the
illusory body.

In general, the esoteric instructions on the illusory body are of profound meaning—the most important teachings of all the sutra and mantra ways. It is therefore explained that if one fails to discover this [stage], all [one's efforts] amount to meaningless hardship. [Nagarjuna's] *Five Stages* of Guhyasamaja states:¹⁷

The study of sutras and tantras
By one who does not discover
The stage of self-consecration
Is meaningless hardship.¹⁸

That being so, in order to attain enlightenment, one must understand all phenomena to be like illusions. In view of that, Aryadeva's [*Analysis of the Stages of*] *Self-Consecration* states:¹⁹

Since everything is an illusory display
It is [possible] to attain enlightenment.

As illustrated by the twelve examples of illusion and other examples, each and every phenomenon of existence and liberation is the body of illusion, or a manifestation that is the very embodiment of illusion. [This defines] the illusory body in its literal sense, which can be conclusively understood through study.

Although there are many kinds of examples of illusion taught in the sutras and tantras,²⁰ that [set of] twelve is very widely known. The twelve are listed in [Aryadeva's] [*Analysis of the Stages of*] *Self-Consecration*:²¹

A [magician's] phantom display,²²
A mirage,²³ a city of *gandharvas*,²⁴
A rainbow, an image in a mirror,
The moon reflected on water, an echo,
A dream, an optical illusion, a cloud,
A flash of lightning, and a water bubble:
There are twelve examples of illusion.

The natures of those should be ascertained in accordance with the *Brief Explanation of the Five Stages*, written by the scholar Munishribhadra, which states:²⁵

A [magician's] phantom display is something created.
A mirage is merely something unreal.
A city of *gandharvas* is a distinct form that can manifest anywhere.
A rainbow is simply many different colors coming together.
A mirror reflection is nothing more than a clear image.
The moon on water appears wherever [there is a water surface].
An echo is merely the effect of a voice²⁶ in a particular spot.
A dream is the work of consciousness alone.
A shadow is merely something incorporeal.
A cloud is simply what enshrouds everything in darkness.

A flash of lightning is an effect that lasts only momentarily.
A water bubble is simply a form that arises and then vanishes.

THE ILLUSORY BODY IN ITS GENERAL SENSE [bb']

Illusory body in its general sense means the meditation of illusion-like contemplation.

The understanding that appearances lack true existence is gained through examples.

There is a pure illusory body....

The actual illusory body, the goal of one's practice, is [the illusory body] in its hidden sense. However, prior to that one must meditate on what is referred to as the "illusory body in its general sense," a contemplation of the illusion-like [nature of things]. That means the impure illusory body, [a perspective] shared by [the way of] the perfections.²⁷ What is to be meditated upon and understood conclusively through examples, such as a phantom display, a dream, and so on, is that all these appearances of existence and liberation—the things that make up the outer environments and inner inhabitants of the three realms—have no true existence despite their appearing [as real].

To explain, all these external and internal things are the composite creations of causes and conditions. They are impermanent, [changing] moment by moment. Without any true essence, they are merely the manifestations of dependent origination. Hence, they are like illusions.

Concerning the way to practice [the illusory body in its general sense], whereby the examples of illusion are applied to forms and other phenomena, the *Subhuti Chapter* of the [Transcendent Wisdom in] *Eight Thousand [Verses]* states:²⁸

Lord, it is not the case that there are forms on the one hand and illusions on the other. Forms in themselves are illusions. Similarly, the other [aggregates]—feelings, recognitions, and mental formations—are all illusions. Even consciousness itself is illusion.

The Indra chapter [of the *Transcendent Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses*], for example, states:²⁹

Illusions and sentient beings are one and the same. They cannot be separated.

Specifically, one meditates that one's own body and others' bodies are like reflections, voices like echoes, and minds like mirages. The *Samvarodaya* [*Tantra*] states:³⁰

View every creature as being like the moon on water.
Realize that what is heard is the same as an echo.
Regard even the mind as a mirage on a desert.

Thus, all phenomena of existence and liberation, while being empty, distinctly appear as the very embodiments of illusion. That, in effect, [defines] the illusory body in its general sense. The [*Hevajra Tantra*] *Two Examinations* states:³¹

This nature of all things
Is purely illusory form.

Then, in the uncommon indestructible way, what is meditated upon is the “pure illusory body”: the resident [deities] and residence mandala, the body of pristine awareness, perfectly illustrated by the twelve examples of illusion. This is the special illusory body. [Nagarjuna's] *Five Stages* states:³²

It is like the clear reflection
Of a finely painted Vajrasattva
In an immaculate mirror.
The body with the supreme of all aspects,
Which is gazed at insatiably,
Will be shown to a good disciple:³³
That is referred to as “self-consecration.”³⁴
The characteristics that reveal its illusory nature
Precisely indicate this very same [body]:
The illusory [body] that is the relative truth.

[The special illusory body] accords with the twelve examples of illusion in the following ways:

Like a phantom human, although it is without any true existence, it possesses all the limbs and the head, the fingers and toes.

Like the moon reflected on water, it is a single thing that can appear anywhere.

Like an optical illusion, it is incorporeal.

Like a mirage, it shifts moment by moment.

Like a dream, it is produced by the mind alone.

Like an echo, it is generated from causes and conditions.

Like a city of *gandharvas*, it is an unpredictable appearance.

Like an hallucination, or like a cloud, it is one but appears as many.

Like a rainbow, it is vividly apparent yet immaterial.

Like a flash of lightning, it is sudden but impermanent.

Like a water bubble, it arises instantaneously.

Like a mirror reflection, it appears while having no true nature.

THE ILLUSORY BODY IN ITS HIDDEN SENSE [cc']

...From that special type dawns realization.

Wind and mind arising as the deity's body after the luminous
clarity of the four empties

Is its hidden sense, the very core, illustrated by the rainbow,
reflection, and moon on water.

When experiential understanding of the common [system's illusory body in its] general sense has been gained through meditation, and when realization of the uncommon [system's] special [illusory body] has arisen in one's mind, one then applies the [illusory body in its] hidden sense.

To expand on that, when the winds have dissolved in the central channel, the three empties (or four) are elicited.³⁵ At the end of the full culmination of that, or the end of luminous clarity,³⁶ in an instant, from just wind and mind, the body of the deity arises. This is known as the "illusory body in its hidden sense" and is the very core of the illusory body. [Nagarjuna's] *Five Stages* states:³⁷

That consciousness triad in itself³⁸

Truly possessed of the winds

Again arises as the body of the yogin:

That is known as the "illusory body."³⁹

[Naropa's *Elucidation*] *Summary of the Five Stages* states:⁴⁰

Although formed of merely wind and mind
The illusory body has an actual appearance.

Masters differentiate between an actual illusory body and one that is a similitude. The actual illusory body is the arising from the special empty as a deity of only wind and mind caused by the winds having dissolved in the heart [channel-wheel]. The similitude illusory body is the arising from the empty as a deity of only wind and mind⁴¹ due simply to the winds dissolving on their own.

This [illusory body in its hidden sense] is illustrated by the twelve examples of illusion in the same ways as is the previous [general sense]. Nagarjuna states:⁴²

By means of a mirror's reflection
One should understand the illusory body.
Its colors are like those of a rainbow,
Its ubiquitousness, like the moon on water.⁴³

[The illusory body in its hidden sense is] an instantaneously complete form, like an image reflected in a mirror. Its colors are vivid and distinct, like those of a rainbow. It is a single thing that is ubiquitous, like the moon reflected on water. These three examples are thereby used to illustrate [its nature].⁴⁴

THE ULTIMATE ILLUSORY BODY [dd']

A link is formed through the illusory body of the union with
training;
And the ultimate, utterly pure, illusory body of the deity is
attained.

Once perfect familiarity with the illusory body in its hidden sense has been achieved, with the channels, winds, and vital essences cleansed of all obscurations, a link [with the ultimate illusory body] is formed by way of the cause—the union [that requires] training—which consists of the illusory body that is a rainbow body.

With all karmic traces and emotional afflictions purified by the innate pristine awareness of luminous clarity, one actualizes, as the result, the ultimate, utterly pure, illusory body of the deity in the form of the enjoyment dimension, the union beyond training. [This is] the ultimate illusory body.

The illusory body in its hidden sense, as it pertains to this discussion, has been expounded by scholars in numerous and conflicting ways. [This illusory body] is evidently of extraordinary [significance]—the very aorta of the highest yoga tantras—and will therefore [now] be presented according to the viewpoints of Lord Mikyö [Dorjé] and his followers.

In general terms, [they explain that] within the supreme channel (central channel) there has always been an extremely subtle vital-essence-and-wind [union], which is the support for innate bliss, and the seed of the undefiled body. This is what is actualized as the illusory body.

In order to actualize the illusory body, it is necessary first to experience the four joys resulting from the dissolution of the winds in the central channel. In particular, at the conclusion of the three empties sustained through the process of gathering winds and mind at the heart [channel-wheel], one must actualize wind and mind as the illusory body. To do so, having first [perfected] the three isolations, with the outer factor of a seal and the inner [factor of] mind isolation, one fully elicits pristine awareness in the forward order.⁴⁵ Thereafter, in the reverse order, one actualizes the body of Vajrasattva—adorned with all the major and minor signs—from the pure essences of wind and mind. For this, there are many synonyms such as self-consecration and relative truth. [Nagarjuna's] *Five Stages* states:⁴⁶

That is referred to as “self-consecration.”
The characteristics that reveal its illusory nature
Precisely indicate this very same [body]:
The illusory [body] that is the relative truth.

That dimension of enjoyment
In itself is a *gandharva* being.
The vajra body is that alone,
The nature of Vajrasattva.

The reference here to a sentient being [called] *gandharva* [“subsisting on odors”] is made because the body of the intermediate-state being is identical [in nature] to the wind-mind inseparability.⁴⁷

To summarize, during the cycle of existence, the coarse, karmic body is repeatedly discarded. Nevertheless, the pure-essence body, which is the inseparability of wind and mind—and the ground for the actualization of the illusory body—continues without interruption throughout all one’s lifetimes in the beginningless cycle of existence until the attainment of total enlightenment. For this reason, it is called the “innate body.”

It is this innate body that creates the mental body of the intermediate state at the conclusion of the four empties during the process of death. It is this same innate body that, at the conclusion of the four empties of sleep, appears as the dream body formed of [karmic] imprints. Even on the levels of the formless [realm], although there is no evident appearance of a body due to the intoxication of meditative absorption, the innate body is present as a latent subtle body.

Practitioners of the creation phase apply on the path [the innate body] itself as the form dimension [in these ways]: In the *Guhyasamaja*, at the end of dissolving the visualization into luminous clarity, the innate body is generated as one’s lord.⁴⁸ In the *Chakrasamvara*, *Hevajra*, and other tantras, the innate body is the *hum* (or other syllable) that enters [the main deities] when the causal vajra-holder is in union [with consort]. In the *Luipa* [tradition of] *Chakrasamvara*, the innate body is the *nada* that purifies the intermediate existence.⁴⁹

Practitioners of the completion phase apply on the path [the innate body] as the form dimension in the following ways:

Father-tantra practitioners accomplish [the stage of] focus on the mind on the basis of vajra recitation, and by means of that [mind-focus], familiarize themselves repeatedly with the definite entry into and re-emergence from pristine awareness. As a result of that, [re-emerging] from the luminous clarity of the all-empty, they attain the illusory pristine-awareness body created from just wind and mind.

Mother-tantra practitioners, on the basis of the inner-fire [practice], develop the mind isolation that comes from the special four joys of blazing and dripping, caused by the pristine-awareness winds being gathered into the central channel, the supreme [of channels]. At the conclusion [of the stage of mind isolation], they attain the ordinary illusory body.

Then, true luminous clarity purifies the ordinary illusory body of stains. In the end is attained the special illusory body. Accordingly, [Nagarjuna's] *Five Stages* states:⁵⁰

That consciousness triad in itself
Truly possessed of the winds
Again arises as the body of the yogin:
That is known as the “illusory body.”

Naropa's *Elucidation Summary of the Five Stages* states:⁵¹

Although formed of merely wind and mind
The illusory body has an actual appearance.

Moreover, according to the *Five Stages*, that illusory body arises from luminous clarity in the way a fish springs from water. The special illusory body is called the “body of union,” or the “dimension of complete enjoyment.”

A RELATED POINT [ii']

The remaining four of the six instructions are branches of those two.

As stated by Tilopa, Naropa, and others, the remaining [four] of the six instructions—dream, luminous clarity, and so on⁵²—are branches of those [inner fire and illusory body]. The natures of the four will be briefly treated in subsequent [sections of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*] and therefore are not commented upon at this point.

12. LUMINOUS CLARITY AND THE COMPLETION PHASE OF UNION

- bb. The Ultimate: The Great-Seal Completion Phase of Luminous
Clarity [II.B.2.d.iii.bb]
 - 1' The Preamble
 - 2' The Detailed Exposition
 - a' The Meanings of Luminous Clarity
 - b' Meditation on Luminous Clarity
 - i' Meditation Methods
 - ii' The Contemplations of the Eight Freedoms
 - cc. The Inseparability [of the Relative and Ultimate]: The Completion
Phase of Union
 - 1' Distinctions Within Union
 - 2' The Method of Meditation on Union
-

[This chapter concludes the description of the three key elements of the completion phase. Presented now are part two: the ultimate, the completion phase of the great seal of luminous clarity; and part three, the inseparability of the relative and ultimate, the completion phase of union.] Part two, the ultimate, the completion phase of the great seal of luminous clarity, begins with a preamble followed by a detailed exposition.

THE PREAMBLE [1']

The ultimate, the great-seal completion phase of luminous clarity, is as follows:

[Here] is presented the completion phase of the great seal of luminous clarity, which strikes the crucial point with respect to the ultimate nature [of things].

THE DETAILED EXPOSITION [2']

This section has two parts: a general elucidation of the essential meanings [of luminous clarity] to be understood; and a discussion specifically on the subject of meditation [on luminous clarity].

THE MEANINGS OF LUMINOUS CLARITY [a']

The true nature and what manifests during sleep and at death are the ground.

At the time of the path, the view of emptiness, the true nature, is the general sense.

The unceasing clarity of that emptiness's own luminosity is the literal sense.

The innate joy from the winds dissolving in the central channel is the hidden sense;

Accompanied by duality, it is the example luminous clarity; without duality, the true.

Nonconceptual pristine awareness brings about realization and the ultimate result.

[Maitreya's] *Jewel Affinity* states:¹

Mind nature is luminous clarity.

It is changeless, just as space is.

The luminous clarity of the ground, as spoken of in that [citation], is the luminous clarity of the true nature, the primordially pure, naturally clear

and luminous basis of phenomena. It is, moreover, the luminous clarity during sleep and luminous clarity at death since those definitely manifest for everyone—meditators on the path and non-practitioners alike—regardless of whether they are recognized or not.

During the time of the path, that [luminous clarity of the ground] is understood—through analyses based on reasonings and scriptural sources and through the strength of experience—as unborn emptiness, the true nature of all phenomena. This view represents luminous clarity in the general sense [from a perspective] shared by [the way of] the perfections. All phenomena made to enter luminous clarity by way of either [the contemplation of] total apprehension or that of successive destruction² is luminous clarity in its general sense [from a perspective] unique to the indestructible way.

The unceasing clarity of that emptiness's self-luminosity is luminous clarity in its literal sense. This is essentially identical to what was discussed [above], the luminous clarity at the time of the ground.

Through cultivation of and familiarity with those [various types of] luminous clarity, the winds dissolve in the central channel, and the luminous clarity of the fourth empty, or the innate [joy], the fourth joy, is recognized as a direct experience. This is the actualization of luminous clarity in its hidden sense. The innate [joy] or fourth empty accompanied by the duality of subject and object is the luminous clarity that is an example. The innate [joy] or fourth empty free from the duality of subject and object is the true luminous clarity. Those [types of luminous clarity] form a link with the direct realization of emptiness through the nonconceptual pristine awareness that is the true nature of things. That direct realization is [luminous clarity] at the stage of training.

[Luminous clarity] at the stage of no more training is [reached when] all phenomena manifest fully as pristine awareness, and through the merging of mother–luminous clarity and son–luminous clarity,³ arise as the infinite expanse of the dimension of reality. That is said to be luminous clarity as the ultimate result.

MEDITATION ON LUMINOUS CLARITY [b']

This section has two parts: the actual meditation methods; and a supplementary discussion on the contemplations of the eight freedoms.

MEDITATION METHODS [i']

In the many meditation methods such as total apprehension and
 successive destruction,
 To elicit correctly the luminous clarity in its hidden sense
 requires giving rise
 To the experience of winds having entered, abided, and dissolved
 in the central channel.

[Next are explained] the methods of meditation on luminous clarity. In general, the luminous clarity that is the goal of practice is luminous clarity in its hidden sense. However, prior to that, one must have a definite understanding of luminous clarity in its general sense. The *Abhidhana Tantra* states:⁴

Being selfless in nature, all phenomena
 Are without stain, just as space is.
 Always meditate on their emptiness
 With the emptiness pristine-awareness vajra.

The actual method of meditation consists in dissolving the environment and inhabitants by means of one or the other of two contemplations, whereupon everything enters luminous clarity. This very method is found in every one of the works [composed] by the great adepts. [Nagarjuna's] *Five Stages* states:⁵

Students who have received esoteric instructions⁶
 Train themselves next in the two types of yoga.
 One is the sequence of total apprehension;
 The other, that of successive destruction.

Thus, there are said to be the two contemplations, total apprehension and successive destruction. Concerning those, the same text says:⁷

From the head down to the feet
 Until [the light] reaches the heart,
 The yogin enters the true limit:
 This is known as total apprehension.⁸

First, the animate and the inanimate
 Are transformed into luminous clarity.
 Afterwards, one does the same with oneself.
 These are the steps in successive destruction.⁹

Just as the breath's vapor vanishes
 From the surface of a mirror,
 Again and again, the yogin enters
 The true limit [of luminous clarity].¹⁰

The proper cultivation of those two contemplations is an extremely profound key factor in bringing about the gathering of winds and vital essences in the heart [channel-wheel]. As a consequence, there arise five signs indicative of the sequential dissolutions of earth, water, fire, wind, and consciousness. The *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* explains:¹¹

The first resembles a mirage.
 The second is like smoke.
 The third resembles fireflies.
 The fourth glows like an oil lamp.
 The fifth is a lasting light
 Like a sky free of clouds.¹²

Thereafter, the four empties manifest in succession. In the cloudless sky [of the fifth sign] manifests the light of the empty, which is like moonlight. Then the increase of light of the [further] empty manifests, which is like sunlight. Thereafter the full culmination of the great empty, which is like the pervasive darkness of night, manifests. Then luminous clarity, or the all-empty, manifests, which is like a [perfectly clear] sky at dawn, not vitiated by the influences of moonlight, sunlight, or darkness. The manifesting of those [four] is described in [Nagarjuna's] *Five Stages*.

On this subject, the earlier masters have asserted that when the winds dissolve at the heart through practice of the outer and inner methods, one can give rise to the special fourth empty, the true luminous clarity. That is the real luminous clarity. Through the winds simply dissolving on their own, [there arises] the fourth empty, the luminous clarity that is an example. That is a similitude of [the real] luminous clarity.

Those two contemplations, as well as the mother-tantra yogas of the

channels, winds, and vital essences, are said to elicit the four joys and the four empties and cause the environment and its inhabitants to be absorbed into luminous clarity. There are many such specific details concerning the methods of practice. However, to elicit correctly the true luminous clarity in its hidden sense definitely requires giving rise to the experience that comes from the winds having entered, abided, and dissolved in the central channel. Furthermore, Nagarjuna and Aryadeva state that to meditate on luminous clarity requires the attainment of the real illusory body.

THE CONTEMPLATIONS OF THE EIGHT FREEDOMS [ii']

**The eight freedoms are based on steps in the way to enter
luminous clarity.**

**Although the name used is the same, the meanings are unique to
this way.**

The eight freedoms are distinctions based on the steps of the actual awakenings that form the way to enter the luminous clarity of emptiness. [The steps include] the total apprehension and successive destruction by means of which contemplative experiences are achieved; the outer and inner elements manifesting like space; [the elements] simply arising as manifestations of consciousness; [the realization of] their primordial nonexistence; the presence of [the effort of] attention; and the absence of [the effort of] attention.

The name “eight freedoms” is the same as the name used in the way of characteristics.¹³ However, here, the eight freedoms are distinctions made solely based on the pristine awareness of inseparable bliss and emptiness, which is the mode of entry into luminous clarity. They therefore have unique meanings, explained as follows:

[One,] as the appearances of one’s own winds and mind arise unceasingly, all appearances unfold as an infinitude of clear images. [This is] the freedom in which forms are viewed as forms.

[Two,] one’s own five aggregates are absorbed into luminous clarity, and what simply appears as an external object is regarded as the body of the deity and illusory [in nature]. [This is] the freedom in which forms are viewed as formless.

[Three,] at the beginning of the successive destruction, oneself and all external appearances are regarded as being without any [basis of] refer-

ence. Then, while the actual destructions, and even the manifestations of the deity's body and bliss, [occur] ceaselessly, they are understood to be without any inherent nature.¹⁴ [This is] the freedom of what is especially beautiful.

[Four,] the clear, empty light [that manifests] when all relative appearances have been dissolved by means of successive destruction is the pristine awareness of light. [This is] the freedom of infinite space.

[Five,] that light manifesting extremely brightly is the increase of light. [This is] the freedom of infinite consciousness.

[Six,] that increase of light manifesting with no inherent nature is the full culmination [of light]. [This is] the freedom of nothing whatsoever.

[Seven,] an absence of fixation [on the previous stage of light], accompanied by a slight deliberate effort of attention, is the full culmination [of light] that leads up to the all-empty. [This is] the freedom of neither recognition nor non-recognition.

[Eight,] to abide in the effortless¹⁵ pristine awareness of bliss and emptiness, in which all dualistic appearances have ceased, is the freedom of cessation.

THE INSEPARABILITY [OF THE RELATIVE AND ULTIMATE]: THE COMPLETION PHASE OF UNION [cc]

This discussion has two parts: distinctions within union; and the method of meditation on union.

DISTINCTIONS WITHIN UNION [1']

The inseparability of emptiness and compassion is union in its general sense.

Being without the conceptual differentiation as two is union in its literal sense.

The special stage, the one taste of emptiness and great bliss, and the inseparability

Of illusory body and luminous-clarity mind itself, is union in its hidden sense.

The three empties arising and passing in the forward¹⁶ and reverse orders

Is the union with training; the union beyond training is the opposite of that.

The realization of the inseparability of emptiness and dependent origination, or the union of emptiness (wisdom) and great compassion (method), is union in its general sense, [a perspective] of the way of the perfections.

The inseparability of innate great bliss (method) and the emptiness of luminous clarity (wisdom) is union in its general sense, [a perspective] unique to the indestructible way.

The union of the two truths, without the conceptual differentiations of relative and ultimate, is union in its literal sense.

Having received teachings on union in its literal sense and having gained experience of union in its general sense, [one reaches] the special stage: According to the mother tantras, what is referred to as “union” [means] the one taste—like a blend of water and milk—of the object, the emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects, and the subject, unchanging great bliss. Accordingly, the *Samputa Tantra* states:¹⁷

It is declared that the merging
Of two aspects, combined indivisibly
Like a blend of milk and water,
Is known as that of wisdom and method.

The perspective of the father tantras is as stated in [Nagarjuna’s] *Five Stages*:¹⁸

When the relative and the ultimate,
First understood as separate aspects,
Are then truly merged together:
That is explained to be the union.¹⁹

The relative truth is the self-consecration of the body so that it manifests as the illusory body. The ultimate truth is the mind entering essential reality through luminous clarity. The union is when those two are one: it is the combination or inseparability of the two, so that there is never an occasion for one to be without the other. Those [descriptions according to the mother and father tantras] represent union in its hidden sense.

Thereafter, one needs to train on the path that involves the three empties

arising in the forward order and passing away in the reverse order. Through that, [one attains] the union [at the stage] of training [related to] the first to the twelfth [stages of realization].

The union [that requires] no more training is the opposite of that. It is free from [the arising and passing away of] the three empties in the forward and reverse orders and is thereby beyond training on the path. It comprises both what is supported—the reality dimension, whose subject and object possess the two purities²⁰—and the support—the form dimension of complete enjoyment, created from just wind and mind. However, those [two] are of a single nature (although conceptually differentiated), known as the “body of pristine awareness,” which is the ultimate union.

THE METHOD OF MEDITATION ON UNION [2']

**The meditation method is to arise from the luminous-clarity
state as the illusory body,
Like the flash of a fish as it springs from water. What arises is the
real or a similitude.**

The method of meditating on union is [first] to dissolve the environment and its inhabitants sequentially; and then, from the state of luminous clarity brought forth by the four empties, to arise as the illusory body. To explain, from the luminous-clarity state, the arising of the stage of self-consecration from just wind and mind is like the flash of a fish [as it springs] from water. [Nagarjuna's] *Five Stages*²¹ states:

Through the stage of self-consecration
Consisting of wind and consciousness,
The lights that are endowed with form
At times bring about beings' welfare.

Like the sudden flash of a fish
As it springs from a clear stream,
The net of magical illusion arises
From the all-empty, so is taught.²²

This [illusory body] arises from the combination of pristine awareness (which, with the sequential dissolution of the [three] empties, has become

solely luminous clarity) and the subtle wind element upon which that pristine awareness is mounted. Like [the body's] shadow, it cannot be cut asunder. It is a vajra body that is not subject to destruction by any means: the very nature of Great Vajradhara.²³ This is explained in [Aryadeva's] [*Lamp Summary of*] *Tantric Practice*.²⁴

One might wonder how this [illusory body] differs from the illusory body of just wind and mind that arises from emptiness when the winds have dissolved and that is made to enter emptiness and then re-emerge. However, there is a very significant difference between those two. The body of just wind and mind that arises from emptiness when the winds have dissolved is the illusory body alone. Equipoise in luminous clarity when the illusory body's environment and inhabitants have been absorbed is luminous clarity alone. Hence, there is an alternation [between the illusory body and luminous clarity].

In this case, the arising of the illusory body from the luminous-clarity state requires the simultaneity of the mind abiding in the nature of luminous clarity and the body manifesting as the illusory body.

On this point, masters have said that the arising of the illusory body from the state of true luminous clarity is the real union. The arising of the illusory body from the state of the luminous clarity that is an example is a union that is a similitude.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Dg.K.	Dergé Kangyur (sDe dge bka' 'gyur): Dergé edition of the Tibetan canonical collection of sutras and tantras.
Dg.T.	Dergé Tengyur (sDe dge bstan 'gyur): Dergé edition of the Tibetan canonical collection of commentarial treatises.
IOK	Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, <i>The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge</i> (<i>Shes bya mtha' yas pa'i rgya mtsho</i>). Beijing: Bod mi rigs dpe bskrun khang, 1982. Pal-pung Monastery: dPal spungs thub bstan chos 'khor gling, 1844.
P	<i>The Tibetan Collected Words of the Buddha and Commentaries</i> (reprint of Peking edition of the Tibetan Tripitaka). Tokyo-Kyoto: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1955.
TBRC	Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center: digital versions of cited texts.
Toh.	<i>A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons</i> . Edited by Ui, Suzuki, Kanakura, and Tada. Sendai, Japan: Tohoku University, 1934.
f., ff.	folio(s) (Tibetan book)
n., nn.	endnote(s)
p., pp.	page(s)
trans.	translated by
vol., vols.	volume(s)
p. 100.1-2	page 100, lines 1 to 2

NOTES

All references to works included in the Toboku catalogue (A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons, edited by Ui, Suzuki, Kanakura, and Tada [Sendai, Japan: Toboku Imperial University, 1934] are to the Dergé edition of the Tibetan Kangyur (bKa' gyur) and Tengyur (bsTan gyur).

INTRODUCTION

- 1 For the detailed story of Kongtrul's life, see Richard Barron, trans., *The Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul: A Gem of Many Colors*. For details on the composition of the *Treasury of Knowledge*, see E. G. Smith, *Introduction to Kongtrul's Encyclopedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture* (*Shes bya kun khyab*).
- 2 *bKa' brgyud sngags mdzod*; *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*; *gDams ngag mdzod*; *rGya chen bka' mdzod*.
- 3 Book One has been translated as *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book One: Myriad Worlds: Buddhist Cosmology in Abhidharma, Kalacakra, and Dzogchen* by the Kalu Rinpoché Translation Group (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1995, 2003).
- 4 Book Two, Book Three, and Book Four translated as *The Treasury of Knowledge: Books Two, Three and Four: Buddhism's Journey to Tibet* by Ngawang Zangpo (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, forthcoming).
- 5 Book Five translated as *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Five: Buddhist Ethics* by the Kalu Rinpoché Translation Group (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1998, 2003).
- 6 Book Six, Part Three translated as *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Six, Part Three: Frameworks of Buddhist Philosophy: A Systematic Presentation of the Cause-Based Philosophical Vehicles* by Elizabeth Callahan (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2007); Book Six, Part Four translated as *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Six, Part Four: Systems of Buddhist Tantra: The Indestructible Way of Secret Mantra* by Elio Guarisco and Ingrid McLeod (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2005).
- 7 Book Eight, Part Three translated here as *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Eight, Part Three: The Elements of Tantric Practice: A General Exposition of the Process of Meditation in the Indestructible Way of Secret Mantra* by Elio Guarisco and Ingrid McLeod (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2008); Book Eight, Part Four translated as *The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Eight, Part Four: Esoteric Instructions: A Detailed*

Presentation of the Process of Meditation in Vajrayāna by Sarah Harding (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2007).

- 8 Book Nine and Book Ten translated as *The Treasury of Knowledge: Books Nine and Ten: Journey and Goal* by Richard Barron (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, forthcoming).
- 9 See Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé's *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge* (henceforth cited as *IOK*), vol. I, pp. 172.13-19.
- 10 In this context, the term "esoteric instructions" (*man ngag, āmnāya*) refers to the profound teachings that form the systems known as the eight great practice lineages of Tibet—Nyingma, Kadampa, Sakya (Lamdré), Marpa Kagyu, Shangpa Kagyu, Zhijé and Chö, Kalachakra's Six Branches of Yoga, and the Stages of Familiarization and Attainment for the Three Vajras. These meditation systems are presented in *IOK*, Book Eight, Part Four. This section has been translated by S. Harding (see above, n. 7).
- 11 *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 257.23-258.1.
- 12 Outer tantras stress outer rituals such as ablution and acts of strict cleanliness. The inner tantra teaches an inner yoga of meditative absorption. Action tantra is considered to be a system of outer ritual; conduct tantra, one of outer ritual and inner yoga in equal measure; and yoga tantra, one of inner yoga in combination with some outer ritual. Highest yoga tantra is a system of inner yoga only.
- 13 *Continuation of the Guhyasamāja Tantra* (Toh. 443), vol. Ca, f. 150a1-2.
- 14 *IOK*, vol. II, pp. 612.17-617.2.
- 15 This oral teaching was given in February 1986 in Sonada, West Bengal, India, at the monastery of Kyabjé Kalu Rinpoché and translated from Tibetan into French by Lama Tcheuky Sengé (F. Jacquemart). The French transcription was translated into English by T. St. Pierre and edited by K. McLeod. The English translation has been revised slightly for consistency of terms with the translated text of *IOK*.
- 16 The tantras state that the human body has 72,000 subtle channels (*rtsa, nāḍī*). There are three main channels: a central channel situated parallel to the spine; a channel to the right of the central channel; and a channel to the left. Supported by the central channel are four (in some tantras, five or six) channel-wheels from which spokes or "petals" of channels branch off. The right and left channels coil around the central channel, forming "knots." The channels serve as pathways for the flow of the winds. See below, Chapter 8, nn. 24, 28. See also Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 172-176.
- 17 The winds (*rlung, prāṇa/ vāyu*) are described as energies possessed of potency or strength. There are five principal winds, each of which is associated with an element and carries out an internal function of the human body, and five secondary winds, which provide the connections between the sense organs and their objects. The winds flow through the 72,000 channels. There are winds of karma and winds of pristine awareness. See below, Chapter 3, n. 19. See also Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 176-180.

- 18 The vital essences (*thig le*, *bindu/ tilaka*) give the body vitality and radiance and are the seeds of great bliss. They are contained within the channels and supported by the winds. The body has both red and white vital essences, the red being predominant in females and the white in males. The principal seat of the white is at the crown of the head; that of the red, at the navel. The vital essences have both refined and residual parts. See Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 181-184.
- 19 *IOK*, vol. II, 655.9-14.
- 20 *IOK*, vol. II, pp. 579.23-580.8.
- 21 Concerning the identity of Rahulaguhyā, see Chapter 3, n. 113.
- 22 A *dharmodaya*, or source of phenomena (*chos 'byung*), is imagined as a tetrahedron, the tip pointing downward and the base facing upward. Abhayakaragupta explains that all steps of the visualization procedure take place within it, and thus it is known as the source of all phenomena, including all the qualities of buddhas. It represents emptiness, the nature that pervades all that exists and from which all that exists manifests (*Awn of Esoteric Instructions*, Toh. 1198, vol. Cha, f. 5a2-5).
- 23 The syllables *om*, *āḥ*, and *hūṃ* are imagined at the forehead, throat, and heart, respectively.
- 24 For a discussion of the three beings (*sems pa gsum*), the pledge-being (*dam tshig sems pa*, *samayasattva*), pristine-awareness being (*ye shes sems pa*, *jñānasattva*), and contemplation-being (*ting nge 'dzin sems pa*, *samādhisattva*), see below, Chapter 3, n. 61.
- 25 For an enumeration of the four types of sealing (*rgyas gdab*), see Chapter 4, n. 48. For descriptions of the sealing procedure, see Chapter 3, nn. 62, 72.
- 26 Longchenpa, *Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind*, vol. 2, p. 21.
- 27 Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa (1357-1419). See Tsong-ka-pa, *Tantra in Tibet: The Great Exposition of Secret Mantra*, translated by Jeffrey Hopkins, p. 122.
- 28 See Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), p. 458, n. 39.
- 29 *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*.
- 30 Taranatha was born in the central part of Tibet near U and Tsang and was named Kunga Nyingpo (Kun dga' snying po). While still quite young he was recognized as the incarnation of Jonang Kunga Drolchok (Jo nang kun dga' sgrol mchog), an important teacher of the Jonangpa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.
The name "Taranatha" is the Sanskrit form of his title Drolwai Gönpö (sGrol ba'i mgon po), meaning Liberating Protector. In Tibetan writings he is usually referred to as Jonang Taranatha or simply Jonang Jetsun Chenpo (Jo nang rje brtsun chen po), names that indicate his affiliation with the Jonang school. This school was founded in the eleventh century by Yumo Mikyö Dorjé (Yu mo mi bskyod rdo rje), and Taranatha was considered to be one of its two leading proponents, the other being Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen (Dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan, 1292-1361). Situated about a hundred miles northwest of the famous Tashi Lhunpo Monastery was the seat of

the Jonangpa, in the region of Jonang (the Jomonang valley in the Lhatsé county of Tsang), a place distinguished by the presence of a lofty stupa and a monastery. The monastery, called Jonang Puntsok Ling (Jo nang phun tshogs gling, Perfect Realm of Jonang), was founded by Kunpang Thukjé Tsöndru (Kun spangs thugs rje brtson 'grus, 1243-1313).

At the age of sixteen, Taranatha met his Indian guru Buddhaguptanatha who was traveling in Tibet. At that time the master was seventy-six. One of the last recipients of the many tantric transmissions and teachings of India, Buddhaguptanatha had a vast knowledge of the history, culture, and geography of India and surrounding countries. It was by relying on his guru's knowledge that Taranatha came to write his astonishingly accurate historical works. Having received teachings directly from Buddhaguptanatha, he acquired a special place in the transmission of tantra in Tibet. An examination of his collected works reveals that Taranatha recorded all the essential teachings on the major tantric traditions, thereby ensuring their preservation, a role that Kongtrul himself was to continue to an extraordinary extent two centuries later.

The subjects of Taranatha's vast writings range from esoteric instructions to history. He produced many works on the Kalachakra, a tantra particularly important to the Jonang tradition. His famous *History of Buddhism in India* is still regarded as a precious source of information. In his writing Taranatha demonstrates an independent and critical mind and an ability to identify common misconceptions about doctrine and history that is very rare among Tibetan writers.

Most of Taranatha's works are exegeses on the tantras and instruction manuals. Although an adherent of the other-emptiness (*gzhan stong*) approach to the great central way (*madhyamaka*), he wrote very few philosophical works. He himself declared that he was more interested in writing liturgy and meditation texts since they would serve the welfare of others in a more significant way.

The main seat of Taranatha's activity was the monastery established by him, named Takten Puntsok Ling (rTag brtan phun tshogs gling), Perfect Realm of Permanence and Stability, located near Zhigatsé (gZhis ka rtse). In Taranatha's day, the monastery's main patron was the ruler of Tsang, Karma Tenkyong Wangpo (Karma bstan skyong dbang po), who supported the reprinting of Jonangpa works. Taranatha also founded many monasteries and taught extensively in Mongolia for almost two decades.

In the first half of the seventeenth century, the Jonang school was persecuted, evidently for purely political reasons. After the death of Taranatha, Takten Puntsok Ling was converted into a Gelukpa monastery and renamed Gaden Puntsok Ling (dGa' ldan phun tshogs gling). All the copies and woodblocks of Taranatha's works were secreted in a hidden chamber of the Potala, and their printing was long forbidden. However, in the nineteenth century Zhalu Ribuk Tulku Losal Tenkyong (Zha lu ri phug sprul sku blo gsal bstan skyong), a contemporary of Kongtrul, apparently persuaded the authorities to allow one edition to be printed.

The Jonangpa school survived the persecution and still exists in its own right today. Many of its teachings and philosophical perspectives have been absorbed into the Karma Kagyu and Shangpa Kagyu schools.

A set of prints of Taranatha's complete works, produced from the woodblocks of Takten Puntsok Ling, was preserved in the library of the Tok (sTog) Palace in Ladakh and published in 1983 by C. Namgyal and Tsewang Taru in Leh. We have used this edition as our source material. Unfortunately, it contains a number of transcription

errors and lacks several volumes. A digital version of the Dzamthang Tibet edition is available through TBRC.

- 31 The three isolations (*dben pa gsum*) are the isolation of body, that of voice, and that of mind. See below, Chapter 7, section entitled “The Arya [Nagarjuna] Tradition.”
- 32 By means of this practice one causes the winds to enter, abide, and dissolve in the central channel. See below, Chapter 8, n. 50.
- 33 In this practice one elicits and stabilizes the pristine awareness of the four joys. See below, Chapter 8, n. 50.
- 34 In this practice is cultivated uncommon emptiness and unchanging bliss. See below, Chapter Twelve, section entitled “The Ultimate: The Great-Seal Completion Phase.”
- 35 *gtum mo*; *caṇḍāli*. See below, Chapter 8, section entitled “The Hevajra Completion Phase: The Second”; and Chapter 11, section entitled “The Yoga of Inner Fire.”
- 36 The four joys (*dga’ ba bzhi*): initial joy, supreme joy, special joy, and innate joy. See below, Chapter 3, n. 82.
- 37 For a description of this realm and the beings who inhabit it, see Kongtrul’s *Treasury of Knowledge: Myriad Worlds* (English translation), pp. 123-125 and 130.
- 38 A city of *gandharvas* (*dri za’i grong khyer*) is a concentration of *gandharvas*, scent-eating beings of the spirit class, that forms a “settlement” complete with buildings and inhabitants, appearing and then disappearing after a few days, or a few moments, without leaving any trace.
- 39 Focus on mind (*sems la dmigs pa, cittālamḃana*) refers to a stage in the Arya tradition of Guhyasamaja, that of purification of the mind, meaning the realization of natural awareness, which comes from the stopping of the one hundred and sixty “natures” (i.e., conceptions). See below, Chapter 7, n. 8.
- 40 *Jewel Affinity* (Toh. 4024), vol. Phi, f. 57b1.
- 41 For a discussion of the meanings of total apprehension (*ril por ’dzin pa, piṇḍagraha*) and successive destruction (*rjes su gzbig pa, anuvīṇāza*), see below, Chapter 7, nn. 33, 34; and Chapter 12, section entitled “Meditation on Luminous Clarity.”
- 42 Dilgo Khyentsé Rinpoché (1910-1991), an outstanding dzogchen master, spent twenty years in retreat and had countless students of many different nationalities. This informal statement was made in Bodhgaya in 1988.
- 43 *Blazing Splendor: The Memoirs of the Dzogchen Yogi Tulku Ugyen Rinpoche*, as told to Erik Pema Kunsang and Marcia Binder Schmidt (Hong Kong: Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 2005), pp. 312, 314. (Permission to include this excerpt granted by author.)

CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO TANTRIC MEDITATION

- 1 This means that the presentation here is based primarily on what is formulated in the tantras (*rgyud*), as opposed to treating the same subject from the perspective of the

traditions of esoteric instructions (*man ngag*). The esoteric-instructions traditions are presented in Book Eight, Part Four, of Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé's *IOK*.

- 2 *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 443), vol. Ca, f. 152a2. At the end of the first line of this citation, the Dergé Kangyur edition reads *chos bstan pa*; Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé's *IOK* (Beijing edition) reads *chos bstan la*. The line has been translated according to the Dergé Kangyur.
- 3 *sgom don*: what is cultivated or meditated upon in each of the two phases, i.e., the methods practiced in each phase.
- 4 *nam rtoḡ gi rtsol ba*: the effort of conceptual thought applied to the imaginative processes in the phase of creation.
- 5 A reference to the five patriarchs of the Sakya tradition (*sa skya'i rje btsun*): Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (Sa chen kun dga' snying po) (1092-1158), Sönam Tsemo (bSod nams rtse mo) (1142-1182), Drakpa Gyaltsen (Grags pa rgyal mtshan) (1147-1216), Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen (Sa skya paṇḍita kun dga' rgyal mtshan) (1182-1251), and Chögyal Pakpa (Chos rgyal 'phags pa) (1235-1280). One of the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism, the Sakya (Grey Earth) tradition takes its name from the monastery founded by Könchok Gyalpo (dKon mchog rgyal po) (1034-1102) in southwest-ern Tibet.
- 6 This triad represents the essence of the phase of creation in the inner tantras. Kongtrul explains that the first, purification (*dag pa*), means to purify the stages of birth, and so forth, all the bases to be purified, by applying a meditation that accords in features with birth, death, and the intermediate state. The second, completion (*rdzogs pa*), means to manifest a special potency that makes it possible to awaken the qualities of awakening, the result, through relying on concentrations that accord in features with liberation, buddha realms, etc. The third, ripening (*smin pa*), means to ripen the cause and establish the basis for meditation on the completion phase, the higher path that is the cause for the attainment of the awakened qualities. It is the first two aspects, purifying and completing, that allow the third, ripening, to take place. See Kongtrul's *Manual for the Performance of Retreat on the Tantras of the Marpa Tradition*, f. 4b2-3.
- 7 This means the capacity to gain the particular powers that would be acquired in this phase, including becoming ripened for practice of the phase of completion.
- 8 The bliss that arises from the melting (*zhu bde*) of vital essence refers to the bliss experienced when the vital essence at the crown of the head melts and descends to the various channel-wheels of the body.
- 9 The phase of creation (*bskyed rim*, *utpattikrama*); the phase of completion (*rdzogs rim*, *niṣpannakrama*). The Tibetan phoneticization of the Sanskrit terms as they appear in *IOK* should be amended to *utpatti* and *nishpanna*.
- 10 Kongtrul explains the meaning of "the innate" (*lhan cig skyes pa*, *sahaja*) in terms of the ground, the path, and the result. In the context of the ground, the innate means ultimate luminous bodhichitta, which transcends the domain of the intellect. It is the lord pervader of everything in existence and beyond, the ground or essence of all. In the context of the path, in a general sense, the innate means the view that understands

emptiness–luminous clarity. In a hidden sense, the innate refers to the direct experience of the innate fourth joy, which occurs as the inner winds dissolve in the central channel, effected through the technique of inner fire or through reliance on a consort. In the context of the result, the innate refers to that very innate of the ground, which, through the strength of contemplation of the innate of the path, has become free from obscurations and possessed of the two purities. See Kongtrul's *Phrase-by-Phrase Commentary on the Hevajra Tantra* (henceforth cited as *Commentary on the Hevajra*), ff. 92b5–93b5.

- 11 For details of the life and tradition of Nagarjuna, see Chapter 3, n. 50.
- 12 The *Commentaries by the Bodhisattvas* (*Byang chub sems dpa'i 'grel pa/ Sems 'grel skor gsum*), three commentaries on tantras contained in the Tengyur: Vajrapani's *Eulogy Commentary on the Chakrasamvara Tantra* (Toh. 1402); Vajragarbha's *Commentary Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 1180); and Pundarika's *Stainless Light Commentary on the Kalachakra Tantra* (Toh. 1347).
- 13 The context of the ground (*gzhi dus*) refers to the starting point of tantric practice, when the fundamental nature of the body and mind has not yet been realized. The context of the path (*lam dus*) means the endeavor to realize that fundamental nature. The context of the result (*'bras dus*) means having awakened the qualities of the ground once that fundamental nature of body and mind has been realized.
- 14 The phase of completion is differentiated in terms of causal aspects (*rgyu'i rdzogs rim*) and resultant aspects (*'bras bu'i rdzogs rim*). According to the *Galpo Tantra*, the causal aspects of the phase of completion include self-consecration (*rang byin brlabs*), that is, the visualization of syllables, and so forth, in the central channel, which brings about the dissolution of winds and the ensuing experience of bliss; the circle of the mandala (*dkyil 'khor 'khor lo*), which means practices with a real or imaginary consort; and the great seal (*phyag rgya chen po*) in its special tantric form (serving the same purpose as self-consecration). They are defined as “causal” because they act as factors in the eliciting of the experience of bliss. The resultant phase of completion comprises aspects related to emptiness (*stong phyogs*), appearances (*snang phyogs*), and the union of appearances and emptiness (*zung 'jug*). The emptiness aspect refers to the experience of the three stages of light and luminous clarity; the appearance aspect, the illusory body; and the union aspect, the coalescence of luminous clarity and illusory body at the stage of training and at the stage beyond training. See Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 243–270.
- 15 Illusory body (*sgyu lus, mayadeha*): the actual manifestation of the form of the deity and the mandala. See Chapter 11, section entitled “The Illusory Body.”
- 16 *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 443), vol. Ca, f. 154a4–5. The citation as found in the Dergé Kangyur reads: *thun mong mchog gi bye brag gis/ tha mal sgrub la bsnyen pa bya/ rdo rje bzhi po thun mong ste/ ye shes bdud rtsi mchog yin no*. That differs slightly from the *IOK* version. The verse has been translated in accordance with *IOK*.
- 17 This verse indicates that the steps to achieve ordinary powers are the four vajra yogas that comprise the phase of creation, namely, yoga (*rnal 'byor, yoga*), subsequent yoga (*rjes su rnal 'byor, anuyoga*), superior yoga (*shin tu rnal 'byor, atiyoga*), and great yoga (*rnal 'byor chen po, mahāyoga*). The steps to achieve the supreme power (awakening) are the six branches of yoga that comprise the phase of completion, namely, with-

drawal (*so sor sdud pa, pratyāhāra*), meditative absorption (*bsam gtan, dhyāna*), yoga of the winds (*srog rtsol, prāṇāyāma*), retention (*'dzin pa, dhāraṇā*), recollection (*rjes su dran pa, anusmṛti*), and contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin, samādhi*). See below, Chapter 8, section entitled “The Kalachakra Completion Phase.”

18 Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802), vol. Ngī, f. 45a6-7. The Dergé Tengyur version reads *kyis* at the end of the third line.

19 Nagabodhi explains that to be “firmly abiding” means “having perfected contemplation.” Here, “contemplation” refers to the contemplation of the one hundred families, and so forth, arising from seed-syllables, etc., in the manner of conditioned birth. Related to this are four points, namely, contemplation, proficiency in contemplation, contemplation brought to perfection, and the purpose of contemplation. The first means to repeatedly set the mind on the focus (just spoken of). Proficiency in contemplation means unobstructedness with respect to the aspects of awakened bodies, voices, and minds, whatever their numbers or dimensions. Contemplation brought to perfection refers to the stage at which everything manifests as the mandala of the deity. The purpose is to overcome coarse conceptions and thereby achieve clarity when practicing contemplation in the phase of completion.

Just as one ascends a ladder step by step, one should apply the five stages of the phase of completion successively, not all together. Just as one needs to use a ladder to accomplish particular tasks, one must rely on the phase of creation, which involves analysis, when cultivating the phase of completion. Just as one has to reach the top of a ladder in order to carry out one's purpose, one can work for the welfare of others only when the five stages have been perfected (a summary of Nagabodhi's *Elucidation of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1833, vol. Ci, f. 210a4-b5).

20 Saroruha (mTsho skyes), or Saroruhavajra, was a student of Anangavajra. Taranatha includes him among the masters of the action-seal (*las rgya, karmamudrā*) transmission. The learned scholar Durjayachandra (Mi thub zla ba) was a student of Dombiyogini. Taranatha includes him among the masters of the inner-fire (*gtum mo, candālī*) transmission. Both these adepts of ancient India wrote important commentaries on the Hevajra tantra: Saroruha, *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Hevajra Tantra: The Lotus* (Toh. 1181); and Durjayachandra, *Commentary on Difficult Points [of the Hevajra Tantra]: Kaumudī* (Toh. 1185). See Taranatha's *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*.

21 Vajragarbha is the interlocutor of the Buddha in the *Hevajra Tantra*.

22 *Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 418), vol. Nga, f. 15b2-3. Here (and in the next sentence) Kongtrul paraphrases the words of the tantra.

23 Great-bliss innateness (*bde ba chen po lhan cig skyes pa, sahajamahasukha*) refers to the luminous clarity and emptiness nature of all that exists. This is called bliss because it is not subject to suffering, nor can it be grasped by concepts. See Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Hevajra*, f. 93b5. See also Chapter 1, n. 10.

24 *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 418), vol. Nga, f. 15b3-4.

25 Kongtrul explains that one cannot speak of the arising of great bliss without the body on which that bliss depends since, without the body, there would not be the comple-

tion of the moment of changing, or deteriorating, bliss or of changeless bliss. For that reason, bliss pervades everything as the indivisible essence of method, the pervaded, and wisdom, the pervader.

Great bliss, the pervader, pervades the minds of all beings, the pervaded. Just as without a flower, the fragrance that rests in it cannot be sensed, without the methods of the action seal, pledge seal, seal of phenomena, and great seal, the great bliss that depends on them for its arising cannot be experienced. This indicates the necessity to meditate on creation and completion as a union. See Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Hevajra*, f. 196a5-b5.

- 26 Vajragarbha's *Commentary Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 1180), vol. Ka. This discussion is found at f. 3b5-7.
- 27 False millet (*ko tra ba*), or Nepalese *kodo*: a species of grain resembling millet eaten by the poor and also used to make an alcoholic beverage in the Himalayan regions.
- 28 Read *gzings la* for *gzings pa*.
- 29 Union at the time of the result (*'bras dus su zung 'jug*): the union of luminous clarity and illusory body at the stage of awakening.
- 30 Atisha's *Lamp for the Path* (Toh. 3947), vol. Khi, f. 240a2-3.
- 31 According to the general view shared by the way of the perfections and the tantric path, the method aspect fulfills the cultivation of positive potential, which leads to the form dimension of a buddha (*gzugs sku, rūpakāya*); and the wisdom aspect fulfills the cultivation of pristine awareness, which leads to the attainment of the pristine-awareness dimension of a buddha (*ye shes sku, jñānakāya*). Thus, both are indispensable. If one of them is missing, full awakening cannot be realized. See Atisha's *Commentary on the Lamp for the Path* (Toh. 3948), vol. Khi, ff. 276b5-278a1.
- 32 This means that an individual who has transformed ordinary perceptions and fixations by applying the yoga of the first phase involving imagination of the deity and who wishes to apply the two phases inseparably should rely on elaborations, i.e., the fabricated images of the deity and the mandala, and so on, understanding that those elaborate forms, though manifest, have no reality, just as the images in a dream and the perceiver of those images have no reality. Having gained such understanding, one settles in the state of meditative equipoise in which those myriad forms are understood as being beyond conceptual elaborations. When, as a result of that, the elaborations and that which is beyond conceptual elaborations become of one flavor (*ro gcig*), creation and completion are no longer experienced separately. The two phases become indivisible. See Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Hevajra*, f. 194a2-5.
- 33 The term "continuum" (*rgyud, tantra*) refers to the luminous-clarity nature of the mind. It is a continuum in the sense that it has always existed with no interruption. It has three aspects: the causal continuum (*rgyu'i rgyud*); the method continuum (*thabs kyi rgyud*); and the resultant continuum (*'bras bu'i rgyud*). The causal continuum denotes the ground of everything, the sky-like nature of the mind, also known as the "essence of enlightenment" or "buddha nature." The method continuum consists essentially of the mind of the phase of creation and the mind of the phase of completion. The resultant continuum denotes the causal continuum itself when free

from adventitious stains and transformed into the state of full awakening. See Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 143-147.

Here, these three aspects are equated with the naturally present affinity for awakening (*rang bzhin gyi rigs*), the evolving affinity (*rgyas 'gyur gyi rigs*), and the lord of the affinity (*rigs kyi bdag po*) or lord of the family. "Lord of the family," in addition to the common meaning of the chief figure of a buddha family, in this context refers to one's own essence of enlightenment fully realized.

The same term "affinity," or "family" (*rigs*), is used in tantra to denote "the single innate great joy" (or the essence of enlightenment as defined in the tantras) in all its possible states and manifestations, a single reality that manifests as many buddha families. That single innate awareness, in the context of the ground, is accompanied by obscurations. Attachment and the other emotional afflictions are therefore present as "impure affinities" or "impure families." In their purified aspects or natures, these emotions are the buddhas of the five families. The families can be further subdivided to an infinite number. See Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Hevajra*, ff. 203a5-205b6.

34 *All-Secret Tantra* (Toh. 481), vol. Ta. These exact words are not found in this tantra, but essentially the same meaning is expressed.

35 *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 418), vol. Nga, f. 16a.

36 Concerning this verse, Kongtrul explains that by means of meditation involving imagination of the form of the deity, ordinary concepts are overcome. By means of meditating on the mandala of the deity, which represents the universe of beings, cyclic existence is purified, and so forth.

Just as a drop of water that has entered the ear is drawn out by flushing the ear with more water, the notion of existence, which is the apprehension of subject and object with regard to the psychophysical constituents, is purified by means of the wisdom of definite knowledge of the essential principle, the form of the deity, and so on. See Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Hevajra*, f. 202a5-b3.

37 *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 418), vol. Nga, f. 16a4.

38 The same negative karma through which an ordinary individual would normally be fettered to existence could lead to release if he or she is possessed of a skillful method. In other words, although it is through desire for material possessions or other beings, and attachment to them, that one becomes fettered, if one knows the instructions on how to use the very nature of desire as an element of the path, one can become swiftly liberated from the attachment. With the wish to free all beings from cyclic existence, one can then attain the fully liberated state of a buddha. See Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Hevajra*, ff. 202b5-203a3.

39 The "three purities" spoken of in highest yoga tantra refer to the purity of the essential nature (*de bzhin nyid kyi rnam par dag pa*), the purity of the particular deities (*lha so so'i rnam par dag pa*), and the purity of self-knowing awareness (*rang rig pa'i rnam par dag pa*). Kongtrul explains that all phenomena, forms and so forth, from the very beginning, have never moved from being of the ineffable essential nature. This is what is meant by the purity of the essential nature. Subsequently, when impurities are eliminated on the path, the aggregates, elements, and so forth are recognized

to be the natures of individual buddhas and their respective consorts in union, and so on. This is the purity of the particular deities. Self-knowing awareness, luminous and devoid of concepts, the nature of direct yogic perception, which has never been tainted by obscurations, is the purity of the innate nature of bliss and emptiness (*bde stong lhan cig skyes pa'i rang bzhin tu rnam par dag pa*), or the purity of self-knowing awareness. These three purities apply to both the phase of creation and the phase of completion. See Kongtrul's *Topical Commentary on the Hevajra Tantra* (henceforth cited as *Meaning of the Hevajra*), ff. 32b7-33a3.

CHAPTER 2: THE PHASE OF CREATION

- 1 *Indestructible Tent Tantra* (Toh. 419), vol. Nga. These exact words are not found in the Dergé Kangyur edition of this tantra.
- 2 Way of the perfections (*pha rol tu phyin pa'i theg pa*): the universal way (*theg pa chen po, mahāyāna*), a gradual path on which one progresses through the stages and the paths to awakening by applying six perfections, or ten.
- 3 The “pride of being a *heruka* or another deity” means the self-identification of the practitioner with the deity being meditated upon. This principle of tantra counteracts one's self-identity as a human being.
Heruka here is a general name for the principal deity of the mandala, such as Chakrasamvara, Hevajra, or Guhyasamaja. The wrathful deities of the retinue are not called *heruka*. In the Kalachakra tantra, *heruka* symbolizes the enjoyment dimension of awakening (*sambhogakāya*), while in the Chakrasamvara, Hevajra, as well as other tantras, *heruka* symbolizes the manifest dimension (*nirmāṇakāya*). See Kongtrul's *Manual for the Performance of Retreat on the Tantras of the Marpa Tradition*, f. 4b3-4.
- 4 *Treatise on Valid Cognition* (Toh. 4210), vol. Ce, f. 129a6-7.
- 5 The *Treatise on Valid Cognition*, from which this citation is taken, is a work that establishes the validity of the direct yogic perception (*rnal 'byor mngon sum*). “True” refers to the truth of no-self of persons and that of phenomena; and “untrue,” to the objects called “ten totalities” (*zad pa bcu*) of the meditation in which one imagines that everything is earth, water, fire, wind, the colors blue, yellow, red, and white, space, and consciousness. Once one has fully familiarized with those objects (i.e., the truths of no-self and the objects of meditation), there arises a vivid and direct yogic perception free from imagination.
- 6 In this context, the white spheres transform into heroes (*dpa' bo, vira*) or gods, and the red, into heroines (*dpa' mo, virini*) or goddesses (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).
- 7 Among the various kinds of mantras, the essential mantra (*snying po sngags*) is a mantra that contains a name or epithet of a particular deity. Some explain that the root mantra (*rtsa sngags*) invokes the awakened body; the essential mantra (*snying po sngags*), the awakened speech; and the quintessential mantra (*nye snying sngags*), the mind of the deity.

Atisha states that the essence of the deity is that of the pure awakening mind (bodhi-

chitta), the indivisibility of the method of compassion and wisdom of emptiness. Moreover, the essential mantra invokes the mind; the quintessential mantra invokes the mind intensely. The secret mantra (*gsang sngags*) is so called because it protects one from a worldly mind. The awareness mantra (*rig sngags*) is so called because repetition of it brings about a special wisdom. The recollection mantra (*gzungs sngags*) is so called because it brings about the unfailing recollection of the pure awakening mind. See Kongtrul's *Manual for the Performance of Retreat on the Tantras of the Marpa Tradition*, ff. 15b3-16a1.

- 8 See Chapter 3, section entitled "The System of the *Net of Magical Manifestation*."
- 9 *Samvarodaya Tantra* (Toh. 373), vol. Kha, f. 267a3-4. The citation as it appears in *IOK* is not identical to that of the Dergé Kangyur, but the meaning does not differ substantially. The Dergé Kangyur reads: *dbang po dman pas bskyed rim gyi/ dkyil 'khor bsgom zhing bsam par bya/ dbang po rnon pos skad cig gi/ rnam pas sems tsam dkyil 'khor bsam/ skad cig rnam pa'i rnal 'byor gyis/ rdzogs pa'i rim pa bsgom pa ni*.
- 10 Abhayakaragupta's *Garland of the Complete Yogas* (Toh. 3141), vol. Phu, f. 95a1.
- 11 Taught primarily in the Guhyasamaja tantra, the four branches of familiarization and attainment (*bsnyen sgrub yan lag bzhi*) represent the most widely used tantric framework for the creation phase. These four apply also to the Chakrasamvara, Hevajra, and Yamari systems of the phase of creation. See Chapter Three, section entitled "The System of Guhyasamaja."
- 12 Warmth (*drod*) specifically refers to the first of the four stages of the path of preparation, which are warmth, peak (*rtse mo*), patience (*bzod pa*), and supreme worldly quality (*'jig rten chos mchog*). See Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Buddhist Ethics* (English translation), p. 494, n. 245; and Gampopa's *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, trans. H. V. Guenther, pp. 229, n. 34; pp. 232-233.
- 13 Karma Trinlé Choklé Namgyal (Karma phrin las phyogs las rnam rgyal) (1456-1539): a renowned scholar, disciple of the Seventh Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso (Chos grags rgya mtsho) (1454-1506) and master of the Eighth Karmapa Mikyö Dorjé (Mi bskyod rdo rje) (1507-1554).
- 14 The concept of training in purifying realms (*zhing dag pa'i shyor ba*) seems to have arisen in the early phase of the universal way (*mahāyāna*). This practice is performed by a bodhisattva and serves the purpose of creating a connection with a particular realm and its beings where eventually, as a buddha, he or she will work for the benefit of beings. The practice involves training in the six perfections while imagining that the world where one is currently living and its inhabitants are pure.
- 15 In the creation phase of the Kalachakra, the world is created twice. As the base for the mandala, first one visualizes a tetrahedron (*chos 'byung, dharmodaya*) as vast as space. This corresponds to the space wherein arise the wind mandala and the other mandalas during the formation of the world (according to ancient Indo-Tibetan cosmology). Within the tetrahedron, the semicircle of wind and the shapes of the other elements are visualized one upon the other, corresponding to the appearance of the elements in the outside world. The last of the elements to be visualized is earth, upon which Mount Meru is created, corresponding to the outer Mount Meru. A multicol-

ored lotus visualized on the top of Meru corresponds to the center of the outer Meru. The visualized moon, sun, and Rahu on the lotus symbolize the moon, sun, and Rahu grouped together at the end of the lunar month (day thirty).

One then imagines that all aspects (from the tetrahedron up to Rahu) merge into one and are represented by the seed-syllables *ham ksha ma la va ra ya*. Once again, the world is created from these syllables, starting with space, wind, and so forth, up to Mount Meru, lotus, moon, sun, and Rahu. On the top of those, a vajra tent (*rdorje'i gur*) is visualized, which contains the complete mandalas of the body, speech, and mind of Kalachakra. Thus, in this process there are two creations of the world. This part of the creation, prior to the visualization of the deities, is referred to as the supremely victorious mandala. Of the four indestructible states (of awakened body, speech, mind, and pristine awareness), this corresponds to the indestructible state of awakened body. See Kedrup Norzang Gyatso's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 139a3-140a5.

Creatures born from eggs undergo, in a sense, two births (*lan gnyis skyes ba ltar*): one, when the egg is laid; another, when the egg's shell is broken. Thus, it appears that the creation of the world twice corresponds to such a "double birth."

- 16 The "two supremely victorious (*rgyal mchog gnyis*) contemplations" are the last two of the three contemplations (*ting nge 'dzin gsum*): the initial union (*dang po'i rnal 'byor, prathama prayoga*), supremely victorious mandala (*dkyil 'khor rgyal mchog, vijaya mandala*), and supremely victorious action (*las rgyal mchog, vijaya karma*). The three constitute a framework of the phase of creation set forth in the *Indestructible Garland Tantra*. This framework also applies to the Chakrasamvara, Hevajra, Guhyasamaja, Chatuhpitha, Mahamaya, Buddhasamayoga, Buddhakapala, and most yoga tantras.

Kedrup Norzang Gyatso states that the contemplation of the supremely victorious mandala entails aspects corresponding to the formation of the body in the womb, and the contemplation of the supremely victorious action entails aspects corresponding to the faculties (*las dbang*) and their actions (*bya ba*) (*Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, f. 139a3).

- 17 Pundarika's *Great Commentary on the Kalachakra Tantra* (Toh. 1347), vol. Da, f. 49a5-7. The passage as cited in *IOK* is corrupt. It should read *gang skad cig gi gang yin pa de ni* for *gang zag gcig gi yin pa de ni* (p. 170, line 18). The text has been translated in accordance with the words as they appear in the Derge Tengyur.
- 18 The egg of Brahma (*tshangs pa'i sgo nga*) seems to be a reference to the Hindu belief that the world came into being from an egg created by the god Brahma. Fragments of this myth can be found in various places in the Vedas. Its more ancient narrative appears in the *Mahabharata*, as well as in the *Vishnu Purana* and *Bhagavata Purana*. The myth is also mentioned in more recent works such as the *Brahmanda* and *Manava Dharmashastra*.

According to this story of creation, in the beginning, there was total obscurity, devoid of any manifestation. A supreme being, the neuter Brahma, desired to manifest, and so began creation by producing the waters and placing in them a seed. That seed developed into an egg, the egg of the female Brahma. Within it was the male Brahma in an embryonic form called *hiranyagarbha* (the embryo of gold). When one year had passed, through the force of Brahma's thoughts, the egg cracked open and

there emerged seven terrestrial spheres with the celestial sphere above. In that way was created the world (researched by Fabian Sanders).

- 19 Womb birth (*mngal skyes*), the exiting from the womb after being conceived in the midst of semen and ovum, is correlated with the visualization of deities being emanated from the seminal essences of the male and female deities in union. Birth from an egg (*sgong skyes*), a form of birth generated from the mixing of consciousness with the red and white vital essences of animals, is correlated with the creation of the deity from a sphere that arises from the merging of moon, sun, and insignia marked by a seed-syllable, and with the creation of the deity from the transformation of an insignia that arises from a seed-syllable between sun and moon. Moreover, birth from a womb is also correlated with the creation of the deity through the five steps of actual awakening (including the step of urging with songs the molten form of the deity); and birth from an egg, with the creation of the deity through the five steps of actual awakening without urging with songs. Birth from heat and moisture (*drod gsher las skyes ba*), a form of birth that results from a consciousness having entered a mixture of heat and moisture, is correlated with the deity arising simply from a seed-syllable on a moon, and so forth. Miraculous birth (*rdzus skyes*), the instantaneous emergence of a life form without there having been any substance as its basis, is correlated with the deity created instantaneously within luminous clarity, with not even the seed-syllable as a support (Kongtrul's *Meaning of the Hevajra*, f. 63a2-6).

All the above types of creation may be applied in one sadhana: The step involving the deities of the consecration of the eye, and so forth, corresponds to miraculous birth. Creation through the five awakenings corresponds to birth from heat and moisture. The retinue deities emanated from the womb of the consort corresponds to womb birth. Manifestation from a sphere corresponds to egg birth (Kongtrul's *Manual for the Performance of Retreat on the Tantras of the Marpa Tradition*, f. 12a4-7).

CHAPTER 3: ENTERING PRISTINE AWARENESS

- 1 The phrase “sequence of visualization,” or “visualization sequence,” used throughout this section is a rendering of the Tibetan term *mngon rtogs*, which literally means “full comprehension,” or realization, and refers to the description for visualizing the mandala, deity, and so forth, through which one fully comprehends the intent, meaning, procedure, and so forth, of the practice. The Tibetan term *sgrub thabs*, literally, method of attainment, has been translated in this book by the Sanskrit word “sadhana.” The term *mngon rtogs*, when referring to the text that sets out the steps of visualization of the deity, is more specific than *sgrub thabs*. However, the two terms are more or less synonymous when *sgrub thabs* is understood in a restricted sense.
- 2 *Indestructible Garland* (Toh. 445), vol. Ca, f. 272a1-2. As to the meanings of the terms of “explanatory tantra of the great yoga” and “general explanatory tantra,” “great yoga” is a name used at times for the highest yoga tantra (*anuttarayogatantra*) and at times for the father tantras (see Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, English translation, pp. 273-276). “General” indicates that it is a commentarial tantra, elucidating not one specific tantra such as Guhyasamaja, but all of the highest yoga tantras. Thus, the two terms are basically the same in meaning.

- 3 The four yogas (*rnal 'byor bzhi*) form the framework for the creation-phase contemplation taught principally in the Buddhasamayoga, the Red and Black Yamari tantras, and so forth. See below, Chapter 3, section entitled “The System of the Yamari Tantras.”
- 4 This procedure through which the deities of the mandala are emanated from the vital essence varies slightly according to the different tantras and tantric traditions. For example, in the *Sadhana of Glorious Hevajra*, this step is carried out after one has gone through the preliminary of the sadhana and has generated the residence mandala and oneself as the causal vajra-holder, a white form of Hevajra in union with consort, symbolic of the indivisibility of emptiness and compassion. From the point of union, light radiates, with sounds, to invoke all buddhas. The buddhas are drawn into the mouth of oneself as the main deity. At one's heart they melt, enter the central channel, and through the vajra channel enter the womb of the consort in the forms of eight syllables of vital-essence nature. As a result, oneself, one's consort, and all buddhas are pervaded by pure bliss. The syllables are then projected outside the consort's womb, where they transform into the eight *gauris*—Gauri, Chauri, Vetali, Ghasmari, Pukkasi, Shavari, Chandali, and Dombini. These members of the retinue position themselves in the residence mandala. See Kongtrul's *Sadhana of Glorious Hevajra*, ff. 10b3-11b2.
- 5 The three contemplations are found in both the system of yoga tantra (*yogatantra*) and that of highest yoga tantra (*anuttarayogatantra*). According to Gö Lotsawa, a distinction was made between outer yoga tantra and inner yoga tantra, with the inner form alone becoming known as the highest yoga tantra (G. N. Roerich, trans., *The Blue Annals*, Book VII, The Preaching of the Tantras, p. 351).
- 6 *Mahamaya Tantra* (Toh. 425). Mahamaya is a male *heruka*, with one face and two arms, depicted standing in a dancing mode while embracing his consort.
- 7 In the context of the phase of creation in general, the yoga of the subtle sphere (*phra thig rnal 'byor*) is carried out in two ways: a practitioner subject to much discursive thinking would focus on a sphere at the heart or at the upper nose-tip, while someone subject to many emotional afflictions would focus on a sphere at the lower secret nose-tip. By relying on those concentrations, one brings forth a state of bliss by applying the appropriate type of wind yoga, yoga of inner fire, and so forth (Kongtrul's *Manual for the Performance of Retreat on the Tantras of the Marpa Tradition*, f. 8b4-6). The Mahamaya subtle-sphere practice in the creation phase seems to be similar to this.
- 8 This explanation is found in Kongtrul's *Sadhana of the Glorious Mahamaya: Essence of Great Bliss*, which stems from the teachings of the lineage of Marpa. According to this system, the yoga of shape (*dbyibs*) is equivalent to the phase of creation, the purpose of which is to overcome attachment to the body. The yoga of mantra (*sngags*) consists of mantra recitation, to overcome attachment to speech. The yoga of reality (*chos*) is equivalent to the phase of completion, to overcome attachment to the mind.
 The yoga of shape consists of fourteen steps: (1) making offerings to the master in order to purify oneself (*bla ma dag pa'i cho ga*) of the karma that projects one into a new life form and completes the conditions of that rebirth; (2) cultivating the four boundless qualities (*tshangs gnas bzhi bsgom pa*) of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity in order to cultivate positive potential in relation to beings who are suffering and

in order that the deity manifests as compassion; (3) meditation on emptiness (*stong nyid bsgom pa*) to cultivate pristine awareness through the purification of the process of death and to use the reality dimension of awakening as the path; (4) visualization of the protective circle (*srung 'khor bsgom pa*) to prevent obstacles in the birth process and to conquer the four “demonic” forces; (5) creation of the mandala of residence and the resident deities (*rten dang brten pa bskyed pa*). The creation of the mandala of residence purifies deluded thinking arising from the eight consciousnesses, allows one to realize the mandala as bliss and emptiness, transforms one’s universe, and actualizes the celestial palace of pristine awareness. For the creation of the resident deities, one visualizes a lotus with four petals at the center of the mandala. On each petal is a syllable *ram* that turns into a sun disk with a syllable *hri* in the center. This step purifies the intermediate state. The four syllables melt into four spheres of vital essence. This step purifies the merging of the consciousness with the sperm and ovum. Light is emanated from the four spheres whereby the buddhas are presented with offerings and sentient beings are purified. The light is drawn back into the spheres, which then become syllables. This step purifies the entrance of winds and mind into the embryo. Light again radiates and converges, whereby the syllables are transformed into insignia. This step purifies the development of limbs of the body. Again light radiates and converges, whereby the insignia become four dakinis. This step purifies birth from the womb; (6) urging with songs (*glus bskul ba*) the central sphere of vital essence to manifest as Mahamaya, the male and female figures, in order to increase the elemental powers of the developing body and mind and to enhance future results; (7) creation of the two main deities (*gtso bo yab yum bskyed ba*) to purify the formation of channels and winds; (8) placement of letters (*yi ge dgod pa*) in the sense organs to purify the formation of the senses and to strengthen body, speech, and mind, plus the winds and mind; (9) merging of the pristine-awareness deities (*ye shes pa bsre ba*) in order to purify the aggregates of feelings and discernments that have developed by the end of the sixteenth year and to symbolize the sameness of the pristine awarenesses of all buddhas; (10) initiation (*dbang bskur ba*) in order to purify and empower one in the activities of one’s buddha family; (11) offering (*mchod pa*); (12) praise (*bstod pa*); (13) tasting the nectar (*bdud rtsi myang ba*). These three [(11), (12), and (13)] serve to please and exhort vajra body, speech, and mind, and to purify the enjoyment of sense pleasures; (14) bringing to mind the pure nature of what is visualized (*rnam dag pa dran pa*) in order that, by going beyond dualistic appearances through visualization of the mandala, the mandala itself manifests as pristine awareness.

The yoga of mantra consists of two aspects: vajra recitation (*rdo rje bzlas pa*) in order to fulfill one’s own aims; and recitation of the mantra of the main deity and the mantras of the retinue (*gtso 'khor gyi bzlas pa*) in order to benefit others. This yoga serves to invoke the deity and overcome ordinary speech.

The yoga of reality (i.e., completion-phase meditation) is as explained in the extensive teaching on this phase but here in particular is in accordance with specific instructions stemming from Kukuriṇa’s extensive *Mahamaya Sadhana* (Toh. 1627). For a discussion on the phase of completion, see Chapter 10, section entitled “Mahamaya Completion Phase.”

- 9 Chandrakīrti’s *Illuminating Lamp* (Toh. 1785), vol. Ha, ff. 97b7-98a2. In the Derge Tengyur edition of this work, the words of the citation differ slightly from those of *IOK*.

- 10 *Net of Magical Manifestation* (Toh. 466), vol. Ja, f. 123b3-6. This citation as it appears in the Dergé Kangyur edition of this work has minor differences, the order of the thirteenth and fourteenth lines being inverted, for example.

The *Net of Magical Manifestation* is considered by some to be a highest yoga tantra, while others consider it to be a yoga tantra. In the Dergé Kangyur, the *Net of Magical Manifestation* is included among the highest yoga tantras, while its commentaries (Toh. 2513; 2514) are placed among the explanations of yoga tantra.

- 11 Read 'od zer for 'od gsal.
- 12 Body isolation (*lus dben*), voice isolation (*ngag dben*), mind isolation (*sems dben*), illusory body (*sgyu lus*), luminous clarity ('od gsal), and union (*zung jug*) are the six stages in the Guhyasamaja completion phase. When body isolation is included within vocal isolation, five stages are spoken of. See Chapter 7, section entitled "The Arya [Nagarjuna] Tradition."
- 13 A passage from Prashantamitra's *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Net of Magical Manifestation Tantra* (Toh. 2514, vol. I, f. 306a5-7) defines the natures of these three yogas from the perspective of the phase of creation as follows: The yoga of consecration entails self-consecration by means of mantras and hand gestures. The yoga of imagination consists in generating oneself as the deity by first meditating on the ultimate awakening mind and then following the successive steps. The yoga of completion consists in instantly emanating and withdrawing the form of the deity.
- 14 The *Net of Magical Manifestation of Manjushri* (Toh. 360), vol. Ka. This work, the first in the tantric section of the Dergé Kangyur, forms a class of its own. One set of commentaries (Toh. 1395-1400; 2090-2121) explains it in terms of the system of highest yoga tantra; and another set (Toh. 2532-2622), in terms of that of yoga tantra.

Manjushriyashas ('Jam dpal grags pa), in his *Extensive Explanation of Chanting the Names of Manjushri* (Toh. 2534), and Manjushrimitra ('Jam dpal bshes gnyen), in his *Commentary on Chanting the Names of Manjushri* (Toh. 2532), expound this tantra from the perspective of yoga tantra, while Lalitavajra, in his *Extensive Commentary on Chanting the Names of Manjushri* (Toh. 2533), expounds it from the perspective of highest yoga tantra. The authors of the *Commentaries by the Bodhisattvas* interpret the *Net of Magical Manifestation* from the Kalachakra point of view. It has also been treated from the perspective of the central way and from that of the great perfection. Butön and others considered this tantra to be of the class of highest yoga tantra in terms of its nature but explained the sadhana in the format of yoga tantra.

Kongtrul states that, of the highest yoga tantra families of attachment, aversion, and delusion, *Chanting the Names of Manjushri* belongs to the delusion family. The main deity is usually a male figure without consort, although some sadhanas include a consort. However, there is neither the urging of the molten form of the deity nor the creation of the deities by emanating them from the womb of the consort. Moreover, *Chanting the Names of Manjushri* describes the ground, path, and result in detail but merely alludes to practices such as release and union. It teaches primarily a nonconceptual form of the phase of creation.

Kongtrul further points out that although some Indian scholars have explained this tantra in terms of yoga tantra, this does not necessarily signify that it is a yoga tantra, just as the fact that Anandagarbha's expositions of the Guhyasamaja are written in

terms of yoga tantra does not prove that the Guhyasamaja tantra belongs to the yoga class. In particular, as indicated in the Indian treatise written by Varabodhi, *Mandala Rite of Manjushri: Source of Qualities* (Toh. 2582), the descriptions of the secret initiation and the initiation of pristine awareness through wisdom are teachings on the inner-fire practices involving four channel-wheels, the liberative path of contemplation of the deity in union, typical of highest yoga tantras. This point is explained in Smritishrijnana's commentary on the *Sadhana of the Net of Magical Manifestation of Manjushri* (Toh. 2584). Moreover, the presence within the sadhanas of the *Chanting the Names of Manjushri* of the four seals and other practices that are the same as those of yoga tantras does not prove that this tantra does not belong to the highest yoga tantra class since such practices are also found in the Chaturpitha.

Ngoktön Chöku Dorjé (rNgog ston chos sku rdo rje) (1036-1102) was the holder of two lineages of the *Chanting the Names of Manjushri*: one transmitted from Marpa, who received the initiation and teachings on the tantra from Maitripa, and the other, from Purang Sherab Dorjé (sPu rangs pa shes rab rdo rje). (Ngoktön received the transmission from Purang before meeting Marpa.) The first of these lineages is exclusively that of the highest yoga tantra; the second lineage (which eventually vanished) was in accordance with yoga tantra. See Kongtrul's *Sadhana of Chanting the Names of Manjushri, Lord of All Tantras, Union of Families: The Blazing Sword of Pristine Awareness*, ff. 1b4-2b6.

- 15 Three continuums (*rgyud gsum*). See above, Chapter 1, n. 33.
- 16 Taranatha explains that the nature of reality as bliss alone is the actual awakening in an instant. The pure essences of the five elements (earth, etc.) as reality itself constitute the set of the awakenings in five parts; the twenty emptinesses as the nature of reality, the awakenings in twenty parts; and the three existences whose nature is like that of a magical manifestation, the awakening by means of the net of magical manifestation.
 The four sets of actual awakenings correspond to the four dimensions of awakening (*sku bzhi*): Because innate reality does not change or move in a second moment, the innate dimension (*lhan cig skyes pa'i sku, saḥajakāya*) is the awakening in an instant. Because it has the nature of the five pristine awarenesses, the dimension of reality (*chos sku, dharmakāya*) is the set of awakenings in five parts. Because it is emptiness yet performs the functions of the sense powers, objects, action faculties, and their activities, the enjoyment dimension of awakening (*longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku, sambhogakāya*) is the set of awakenings in twenty parts. Because its various emanations, like magical manifestations, bring about the welfare of beings, the manifest dimension of awakening (*sprul sku, nirmāṇakāya*) is the set of awakenings by means of the net of magical manifestation. See Taranatha's *Commentary on [Naropa's] Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation*, ff. 12a7-13a4.
- 17 See below, Chapter 3, n. 22. This step is not part of the sadhanas of the *Chanting the Names of Manjushri*.
- 18 See above, Chapter 3, n. 7.
- 19 The tantras speak of ten winds (*rlung bcu*), five principal winds and five secondary, distinguished according to the various functions the winds perform in the body. The great life-sustaining wind (*srog 'dzin chen po'i rlung*), which accompanies con-

sciousness at the moment of conception, generates the principal winds and secondary winds. The principal winds (*rtsa ba'i rlung lnga*) are the life-sustaining (*srog 'dzin, prāṇa*), downward-voiding (*thur sel, apāna*), fire-accompanying (*me mnyam, samāna*), ascending (*gyen rgyu, udāna*), and pervading (*khyab byed, vyāna*) winds. The five secondary winds (*yan lag gi rlung lnga*), which preside over the functioning of the five sense faculties, are the serpent (*klu, nāga*), tortoise (*rus sbal, kūrma*), lizard (*rtsangs pa, kṛkara*), gift of the gods (*lhas sbyin, devadatta*), and victorious in wealth (*nor las rgyal, dhanamjaya*) or victorious by means of a bow (*gzhu las rgyal*) winds. These have alternative names: moving (*rgyu ba*), moving thoroughly (*rnam par rgyu ba*), moving perfectly (*yang dag par rgyu ba*), moving intensely (*rab tu rgyu ba*), and moving resolutely (*nges par rgyu ba*), respectively. Except for the life-sustaining wind, which flows mainly through the central channel above the navel, and the downward-voiding wind, which flows mainly through the central channel below the navel, all the other winds, according to tantric expositions, originate in the eight channels of the heart channel-wheel but stay in other parts of the body where they perform their functions. These winds start to develop from the first moment of conception, and further evolve throughout the various phases of fetal growth until they are fully functional by the tenth lunar month in the womb.

These winds move through the various channel-wheels of the body, right up to the nostrils from where they issue forth as the natures of the four elements of earth, water, fire, wind (or five, if space is included). They are called the “winds of the ten mandalas of the elements” (*'byung ba'i dkyil 'khor*) because they are exhaled through the nostrils as the natures of the elements in the order of dissolution (i.e., first earth, then water, etc.) and inhaled through the nostrils as the natures of the elements in the order of generation (first space, then wind, etc.). The winds are said to emerge after the child is born because it is from the time of birth that they start to flow through the nostrils. For more points concerning the winds, see Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), Chapter 9, section “Winds,” pp. 176-180; 441, n. 47; 442, n. 48.

- 20 Abhayakara mentions this method in his *Garland of the Complete Yogas* (Toh. 3141), vol. Phu, ff. 94b7-95a1.
- 21 For this rite, one first imagines moon disks arising from the vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet, one moon on each of fifteen corpses, and on each moon, the specific seed-syllable (*sa bon*) of the deity. The seed-syllable transforms into the insignia (*phyag mtshan*) marked by the same seed-syllable. Then, one visualizes sun disks arising from the consonants of the Sanskrit alphabet. Moon and sun symbolize the white and red vital essences, the union of which generates bliss. From the merging of moon, sun, and seed-syllable arises each of the fifteen deities of the mandala of Hevajra.
- As to how the aspects of the visualization correspond to the bases to be purified, the moon represents the sperm of the father; the sun, the ovum of the mother; the seed-syllable, the consciousness of the intermediate being who seeks rebirth; the merging of moon, sun, and seed-syllable represents conception in the mother's womb; and the manifestation of the complete body of the deity, the full development of the fetus in the womb. See Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Hevajra*, ff. 123b4-124b4.
- 22 This is the phase in which, having visualized oneself as the causal vajra-holder through

the five awakenings, and having emanated the circle of deities of the mandala and then melted into vital essence, one becomes the resultant vajra-holder through creation in three steps.

In that procedure, one visualizes oneself as the causal Hevajra. One imagines that the consciousness of the intermediate-state being in the form of the three syllables (*om, āh, hūm*), or a *nada*, enters the mouth of Hevajra, becomes the nature of great bliss, and from the vajra of the male, enters the lotus of the female. As a result, Hevajra and his consort melt and become a sphere of vital essence (the seed of vajra mind). At this point, Pukkasi and the other three yoginis (of the intermediate directions), greatly distressed, urge with songs (*glus bskul ba*) Hevajra and his consort to manifest again. Aware of their request, the deity, in the form of molten vital essence, recalls his vow and then reappears, first as seed-syllable, etc., and finally as the resultant Hevajra in union with consort (a summary of Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Hevajra*, ff. 269b7-271a1). As to the meaning of the term "vajra-holder," Shridhara explains that "vajra" represents the five pristine awarenesses; and "holder" means to possess the natures of the pristine awarenesses (Shridhara's *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Yamari Tantra: Illumination of the Innate*, Toh. 1918, vol. Bi, f. 119a1).

- 23 The *Commentaries by the Bodhisattvas* (*Byang chub sems pa'i 'grel pa*) are also known as the *Three Cycles of Commentaries by the Bodhisattvas* (*Sems 'grel skor gsum*). See above, Chapter 1, n. 12.

The set of actual awakenings in twenty parts (*rdzogs pa'i byang chub nam pa nyi shus*) is explained by Taranatha as follows: Because the nature of the ground of reality is that of the twenty emptinesses and because, in the context of the path, the five sense powers, five objects, five action faculties, and their five activities are transformed by inner fire and thereby understood to be natural emptiness, one speaks of the awakened-body manifestation of inner fire and the invincible sound that accompanies that body as the actual awakenings in twenty parts.

As for the result, because it is emptiness and yet performs the functions of the sense powers, objects, action faculties, and activities, the enjoyment dimension of awakening is explained to be the set of actual awakenings in twenty parts (Taranatha's *Commentary on [Naropa's] Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation*, ff. 12a7-13a4).

- 24 The ten causal factors (*bskyed rgyu'i chos bcu*) refer to the ten principal and secondary winds; the ten resultant factors (*bskyed pa'i chos bcu*), the five aggregates and the five sense consciousnesses (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).
- 25 *Secret Manjushri* (*Jam dpal gsang ldan*) is a name for the *Net of Magical Manifestation of Manjushri Tantra* (Toh. 360). The "commentaries" are its explanatory texts contained in the highest yoga tantra section (Toh. 1395-1400) and in the yoga tantra section (Toh. 2090-2110) of the Tengyur.
- 26 Five pristine awarenesses (*ye shes lnga*): pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena (*chos dbyings ye shes, dharmadhātujñāna*); mirror-like pristine awareness (*me long lta bu'i ye shes, ādarsajñāna*); pristine awareness of sameness (*mnyam nyid, samatājñāna*); pristine awareness of discernment (*sor rtog ye shes, pratyavekṣajñāna*); and pristine awareness of accomplishment (*bya ba grub pa'i ye shes, kṛtyānusthānajñāna*).

The pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena is explained to

be Vairochana, the immutable. It is beyond the dualism of subject and object, the total pacification of illusion, and like the sky, free from all mental constructs. Mirror-like pristine awareness is Akshobhya, the ground from which clarity and emptiness manifest. Being the total pacification of the ground-of-all consciousness from which all other consciousnesses develop, it provides the ground for the three other pristine awarenesses, and like the surface of a polished mirror, is free from the stains of dualism. The pristine awareness of sameness is Ratnasambhava, the great perfection in the sameness of all things. Being the total pacification of pride, it is knowledge of the sameness of self and others and that of existence and liberation. The pristine awareness of discernment is Amitabha, the knowledge of the ultimate nature of all things and the ways they manifest. Being the total pacification of craving, it is discernment of the emptiness nature of things and their manifestations based on cause and effect. The all-accomplishing pristine awareness is Amoghasiddhi, marvelous awakened activity. Being the total pacification of jealousy, it spontaneously and unobstructedly achieves others' aims by means of body, speech, and mind (a summary of Longchenpa's *Great Chariot*, ff. 170-172). See also Lakshmi's explanation in Wayman's *Yoga of the Guhya-samāja*, pp. 213-215.

- 27 For an example of this procedure, see Kongtrul's *Sadhana of Chanting the Names of Manjushri, Lord of All Tantras, Union of Families: The Blazing Sword of Pristine Awareness*.
- 28 Yoga tantra speaks of five actual awakenings (*mngon par byang chub pa, abhisambodhi*) contemplated by Buddha Shakyamuni as he attained enlightenment and, modeled on these, five awakenings formulated for later followers.

According to the formulations for later followers, for the first awakening, one utters the mantra that means “*om* I penetrate mind” (*om cittam prativedham karomi*) and meditates on the intrinsic purity of the sixteen emptinesses (see below, Chapter 4, n. 69) as the very nature of one's mind in the symbols of the sixteen vowels (fourteen vowels, plus *anusvāra* and *visarga*). One then imagines that these vowels transform into a white moon disk, symbol of the mirror-like pristine awareness (*me long lta bu'i ye shes, ādarśajñāna*), located at one's heart. This is known as awakening by means of the discerning faculty of one's mind (*sems so sor rtog pa, cittapratyavekṣanā*).

For the second awakening, one utters the mantra that means “*om* I generate the mind of awakening” (*om bodhicittam utpādayāmi*) and meditates on emptiness free from adventitious impurities as the very nature of one's mind in the symbols of the thirty-four consonants. One then imagines that the consonants transform into a red moon disk, symbol of the pristine awareness of sameness (*mnyam nyid ye shes, samatājñāna*), at one's heart. This is known as awakening by means of the resolve of the supreme awakening mind (*byang chub mchog tu sems bskyed pa, paramabodhicittotpāda*).

For the third awakening, one utters the mantra that means “*om* vajra stay” (*om tiṣṭha vajra*) and contemplates a white five-pronged vajra, symbol of the discerning pristine awareness (*so sor rtog pa'i ye shes, pratyavekṣanajñāna*), at one's heart. This is known as awakening by means of the firm vajra (*brtan pa'i rdo rje, dṛḍha vajra*).

For the fourth awakening, one utters the mantra that means “*om* I am the vajra itself” (*om vajrātmako 'ham*) and imagines light, symbol of the all-accomplishing pristine awareness (*bya grub ye shes, kṛtyānuṣṭhānajñāna*), emanating throughout the universe from the five-pronged vajra in one's heart. One then imagines that the essen-

tial natures of the bodies, voices, and minds of all the awakened ones enter the vajra at the heart. This is known as awakening by means of the embodiment of the vajra (*rdo rje'i bdag nyid, vajrātma*).

For the fifth awakening, one utters the mantra that means “om I am as all the transcendent ones are” (*om yathā sarvatathāgata tathāham*) and meditates that the moons and vajra at the heart transform into Great Vairocana, symbol of the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena (*chos dbyings ye shes, dharmadhātujñāna*). This is known as awakening by means of sameness with all the awakened ones (*de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad ji lta ba, sarvatathāgatasamātā*).

See Padmavajra's *Commentary on the Guide to the Meaning of Tantra* (Toh. 2502), vol. 'I, ff. 109a3-110b1; also *mKhas grub rje's Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems*, F.D. Lessing and A. Wayman, trans., pp. 29-35.

- 29 *Indestructible Peak Tantra* (Toh. 480), an explanatory tantra of the *Summation of Essential Principles* (Toh. 479), the root tantra (*mula tantra*) of yoga tantra but also an important reference and source for the highest yoga tantra.

- 30 *Vajradaka* (Toh. 370) and *Samputa* (Toh. 381) are explanatory tantras of the Chakrasamvara, whose literature includes the tantras from Toh. 368 to Toh. 415 of the Dergé Kangyur.

As an example of the procedure of the five awakenings, Kongtrul explains that, having visualized the celestial palace, one imagines that all the buddhas of the universe are absorbed into a *nada* in the middle of the palace. As one utters the specified mantra, one imagines that two sets of vowels on the central seat transform into a white moon. Next, as one utters another mantra, one imagines that two sets of consonants transform into a red moon. The intermediate-state being in the form of a *nada* enters the space between the two moons. The *nada* changes into a sphere, then a half moon, and gradually a complete syllable *hum*, which changes into a vajra marked by that syllable. The vajra emanates buddhas who awaken all sentient beings and transform them into forms of the main deity. They are absorbed into the vajra as one utters the next specified mantra. Then, as one says another mantra, the vajra transforms into the main deity, who embodies the three-tiered beings (pledge-being, contemplation-being, and pristine-awareness being) (summary of Kongtrul's *Sadhana of the Peaceful Chakrasamvara Vajrasattva, Lord of the Mandala, Union of Families, as Taught in the Samputi Tantra: Awn of Union*, ff. 7b7-8a7).

- 31 Guhyasamaja is a father tantra whose literature comprises the volumes listed as Toh. 442 to Toh. 451 (possibly including 452 and 453) in the Dergé Kangyur and Toh. 1784 to Toh. 1917 in the Dergé Tengyur. There are two commentarial lineages of the Guhyasamaja tantra, that of the Arya tradition (*'phags lugs*) and that of the Jnanapada tradition (*ye shes zhabs lugs*). The first is headed by Nagarjuna (see below, Chapter 3, n. 50) and includes Nagabodhi, Aryadeva, Chandrakirti, and others. The Jnanapada tradition is named after Buddhashrijnana, a disciple of the tantric adept Lilavajra. The masters of this school include Vitapada, Smritijanakirti, and possibly also Abhayakaragupta. See below, Chapter 7, sections entitled “The Arya [Nagarjuna] Tradition” and “The Jnanapada Tradition.” For a discussion of the approaches of these schools and their lineages, see Wayman's *Yoga of the Guhyasamaja*.

- 32 Original lord (*dang po'i mgon po*) here refers to the principal deity of the mandala.

- 33 For the first awakening, the practitioner, while uttering the mantra that means “om I have an essential nature of indivisible emptiness and pristine awareness” (*om śūnyatā jñāna vajra svabhāvātmaḥ haṃ*), meditates on the nature of emptiness; this is awakening by means of essential reality (*de bzhin nyid la byang chub pa*). For the second awakening, one meditates on a moon disk (*zla ba*). For the third awakening, one visualizes the three seed-syllables (*sa bon*), *om*, *ah*, *hum*, upon the moon disk. For the fourth awakening, one imagines that the insignia (*phyag mtshan*) arises from the transformation of the syllables on the moon. For the fifth awakening, one imagines that the insignia transforms into the complete form (*sku rdzogs pa*) of the deity. See below, Chapter 3, section entitled “The System of Guhyasamaja.”
- 34 Luipa, known by the name “Subsisting on Fish Entrails” (Nya lto pa), was one of the most renowned adepts of tantric Buddhism in ancient India. Two works on the Chakrasamvara tantra are attributed to him in the Dergé Tengyur, Toh. 1427 and 1454.
- 35 Here, the syllable *hum* is called the causal vajra-holder (*rgyu rdo rje 'dzin pa*) because it transforms into the main deity, or the resultant vajra-holder (*'bras bu rdo rje 'dzin pa*). This explanation is from the perspective of the Chakrasamvara and other tantras that do not include the step of the creation of the deity by urging the molten form with songs (*zhu ba glus bskul ba*). In tantras such as Hevajra and Guhyasamaja that do include that step of creation, the causal vajra-holder is the main deity generated at the beginning of the sadhana through the five awakenings. The resultant vajra-holder is the main deity created after the causal vajra-holder has melted into seminal fluid or luminous clarity and then re-emerges as the resultant vajra-holder upon the request of four deities of the retinue. See Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Hevajra*, f. 273b3-5.
- 36 *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 417), vol. Nga, f. 9a2-3.
- 37 Here the sun is called Seven Sevens (*bdun gyi bdun pa*) because, according to ancient Indian mythology, the sun is moved by seven chariots, each chariot pulled by seven horses (Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Hevajra*, f. 124b5-6).
- 38 These five actual awakenings are of the natures of the five pristine awarenesses. Through meditation on the shape of the moon disk, which is endowed with the nature of mirror-like pristine awareness, there is awakening by means of the moon, which is mirror-like pristine awareness (*zla ba me long ye shes las byang chub pa*). Likewise, through meditation on the sun, endowed with the nature of the pristine awareness of sameness, there is awakening by means of the sun, the pristine awareness of sameness (*nyi ma mnyam nyid ye shes las byang chub pa*). Through meditation on the insignia of the deity marked by the seed-syllable, endowed with the nature of discerning pristine awareness, there is awakening by means of the insignia, the discerning pristine awareness (*phyag mtshan so sor rtog pa'i ye shes las byang chub pa*). Through meditation on the merging of moon, sun, and insignia into one, endowed with the nature of all-accomplishing pristine awareness, there is awakening by means of the merging of moon, sun, and insignia, the all-accomplishing pristine awareness (*zla ba nyi ma phyag mtshan 'dres pa bya grub ye shes las byang chub pa*). Here, the all-accomplishing pristine awareness is referred to by the alternative name of “active pristine awareness” (*bya ba nan tan ye shes*). Through meditation on the full manifestation of the body of

the deity, endowed with the nature of the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena, there is awakening by means of the full manifestation of the form of the deity, the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena (*lha'i sku rdzogs pa chos dbyings ye shes las byang chub pa*). See Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Hevajra*, ff. 124b4-125a3.

- 39 Scent-eater (*dri za, gandharva*) refers to a sentient being in the intermediate state between death and rebirth who is seeking a new life. The symbol for an intermediate-state being varies from one tantra to the next. Kongtrul states that in elaborate procedures, the intermediate-state being has face and arms (i.e., the form of a deity); in medium procedures, it is symbolized by syllables; in concise procedures, it is symbolized by the *nada* sign; and in extremely concise procedures, its form is not specified but is simply mixed with a mental impression (*snang ba*) (Kongtrul's *Manual for the Performance of Retreat on the Tantras of the Marpa Tradition*, f. 11a2-3). Here, one's own mind appears as the symbol for the intermediate-state being.
- 40 The syllable *ham* is visualized at the head or the heart of Kalachakra (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).
- 41 In the creation phase of Kalachakra, once the outer world has been recreated as the mandala of residence, in the center of that, above a seat of lotus, moon, sun, and Rahu (or Kalagni), one imagines a moon disk marked with the thirty-two vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet. This corresponds to the semen of the father at the time of conception. Below the moon, one visualizes a sun disk marked with the eighty consonants of the Sanskrit alphabet. This corresponds to the ovum of the mother at the time of conception. In the middle of the moon, one visualizes syllable *hum*, which transforms into a vajra marked by the same syllable. This corresponds to the consciousness of the intermediate being entering the midst of semen and ovum. At the same time, one visualizes a syllable *hi* which corresponds to the wind that serves as the mount for that consciousness. The sun, moon, vowels, consonants, and vajra merge into one, from which arises the full manifestation of the deity Kalachakra endowed with syllable *ham*. This corresponds to the merging of semen, ovum, consciousness, and wind in the initial stage of formation of the body in the womb. See Kedrup Norzang Gyatso's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 140b6-141a3.
- 42 Vajragarbha's *Commentary Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 1180), vol. Ka, f. 38a5. The citation in the Dergé Tengyur, which differs from that of *IOK*, reads as follows: *ma yi mngal du khu ba rdul/ gnyis pa sa bon bsdu pa'o/ srog rlung rnam par shes pa nyid/ lnga po rnam kyis lus rdzogs pa/ gzugs brnyan rdzogs par brjod par bya*.
- 43 The five pristine awarenesses correspond to the five victorious ones (*rgyal ba lnga*), who are the buddhas of the five families: The mirror-like pristine awareness is Vairocana (rNam par snang mdzad); the pristine awareness of sameness, Ratnasambhava (Rin chen 'byung gnas); the discerning pristine awareness, Amitabha ('Od dpag med); the all-accomplishing pristine awareness, Amoghasiddhi (Don yod grub pa); and the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena, Akshobhya (Mi bskyod pa) (Wayman's *Yoga of the Guhyasamaja*, p. 242). Note that there are variations; see above, Chapter 3, n. 26, where the buddha associated with mirror-like pristine awareness is said to be Akshobhya, and the buddha associated with the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena, Vairocana.

- 44 *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 443), vol. Ca, f. 154a3-4.
- 45 Here, the term “yoga tantra” (*rnal ’byor rgyud*) does not refer to the system of yoga tantra (the third of the four divisions of tantra) but to tantric yoga within the system of highest yoga tantra, specifically the yoga of Guhyasamaja.
- 46 The terms familiarization (*bsnyen pa, seva*), near attainment (*nye bar sgrub pa, upasādhana*), attainment (*sgrub pa, sādhanā*), and great attainment (*sgrub pa chen po, mahāsādhana*) can be considered equivalent to the four vajra steps (*rdo rje bzhi*) of the phase of creation, and equivalent to the six branches of yoga (*rnal ’byor yan lag drug*) of the phase of completion (see above, Chapter 1, n. 17). Hence, the four are said to incorporate all practices of the highest yoga tantra, and here specifically those of the Guhyasamaja.
- 47 *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 443), vol. Ca, f. 154a4-5. The Kangyur version reads: *thun mong mchog gi bye brag gis/ tha mal sgrub la bsnyen pa bya/ rdo rje bzhi po thun mong stel/ ye shes bdud rtsi mchog yin no*.
- 48 From this verse it is clear that the term “familiarization” (*bsnyen pa, seva*) can also be used in a general way to indicate the entire system of practice of the Guhyasamaja.
- 49 See above, Chapter 1, n. 17.
- 50 The Arya tradition (*’phags lugs*) of Guhyasamaja, headed by Nagarjuna, is based on commentaries written by Nagarjuna and his followers. His own works include the *Brief Sādhana* (Toh. 1796), mainly pertaining to the phase of creation; *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802), mainly pertaining to the phase of completion; *Large Commentary on the Eighteenth Chapter* (Toh. 1784), a commentary on the *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra*; and *Tantric Commentary on the Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 1784), a commentary on the root tantra of *Guhyasamaja*. Among the important works of his followers we find Nagabodhi’s *Explanation of the Five Stages: The Garland of Jewels* (Toh. 1840); and Aryadeva’s *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice* (Toh. 1803), an important work on the system of practice of this tantra. The most outstanding commentary on the root tantra of *Guhyasamaja* is Chandrakirti’s *Illuminating Lamp* (Toh. 1785).

Nagarjuna’s *Large Commentary on the Eighteenth Chapter* is found in the Tengyur as a separate text with its own title, right after Nagarjuna’s *Commentary on the Guhyasamaja* (Toh. 1784). However, the Tohoku catalogue does not list the *Large Commentary on the Eighteenth Chapter* with a separate number but includes it within Toh. 1784 (vol. Sa, ff. 284a-324a).

Nagarjuna was born of a brahmin family in Vidharbha, south India, about 400 years after the death of the Buddha. While still a child, he entered the monastic university of Nalanda at the time when the great Brahmana Rahula, later known as Saraha, was serving as abbot, and become Rahula’s student. There was no aspect of the hinayana or mahayana teachings that Nagarjuna was unable to grasp, and soon he was recognized as a great teacher. He pioneered the *madhyamika* system of the emptiness of all phenomena and applied himself to its propagation. However, because he had greatly helped the elders (*shravakas*) in safeguarding monastic discipline, he became known as the supreme elder of all Buddhist schools of his time.

Although Western scholars believe that Nagarjuna the *madhyamika* philosopher

and Nagarjuna the tantric alchemist were two different persons, there is nothing in the Indian or Tibetan traditions to support this view. These traditions portray just one Nagarjuna who was both the great expounder of the *madhyamika* system and an early tantric master in the Guhyasamaja lineage. They relate how when he first arrived at Nalanda, Rahula introduced him to the recitation of the Amitayus mantra to increase his life span since soothsayers had predicted that he would live only seven more years. Nagarjuna subsequently practiced the sadhanas of Mahamayuri, Kurukulla, and Mahakala, thereby attaining numerous magical powers, including the power to change iron into gold, powers that he relied on extensively in periods of famine in order to feed the populations of the great monastic universities. For the same purpose he also conjured the services of the goddess Chandika and later that of Mahakala in order to support the Buddhist communities.

Nagarjuna is said to have recovered the Transcendent Wisdom scriptures and many retention mantras (*dharani*) from where they lay hidden in the naga realms, those being the last mahayana scriptures to appear in the world. He established one hundred and eight centers for the study of the mahayana and provided them with his own fundamental treatises negating the inherent existence of phenomena. In the latter part of his life Nagarjuna returned to the south where he converted King Udayana and taught for many years. He spent his last years practicing the path of secret mantra on Shri Parvata mountain. It is said that because he had attained the power of the elixir of longevity, his complexion was as smooth as a polished gem and his life lasted six hundred years less twenty-nine, ending only when he himself deemed it beneficial to others to depart from this world. In these ways, the contribution of this master to the various aspects of the Buddhist doctrine—hinayana, mahayana, and tantra—was incomparable.

It was evidently Saraha from whom Nagarjuna received the oral transmission of the Guhyasamaja. Tradition holds that the only one of Nagarjuna's disciples fit to receive the transmission of these tantric teachings was Nagabodhi, who is said to have achieved realization through practicing them and even to have attained immortality. About seven hundred years after Nagarjuna's passing, the Arya system of the Guhyasamaja was widely propagated through the traditions of Matangipa (alias Nagabodhi) and Jinaputra.

Although Nagarjuna's tradition of the Guhyasamaja spread widely in both India and Tibet, it was not known during the earlier propagation of Buddhism in Tibet. It spread during the later propagation when Rinchen Zangpo translated the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* into Tibetan. After that, many Tibetan translators including Chak Lotsawa traveled to India, studied the Guhyasamaja teachings and then taught them in Tibet. The most important traditions of the Arya system of the Guhyasamaja current in Tibet were those taught by the eminent Marpa Chökyi Lodrö and Gö Khugpa Lhetsé. Marpa's tradition was continued by his disciple Tsurtonpa. Gö Khugpa Lhetsé, who thoroughly revised the Guhyasamaja texts previously translated by others, received the Guhyasamaja transmission from seventy teachers, including Devakarachandra and Viryabhadrā, as well as from two dakinis. He had numerous outstanding disciples who continued his lineage.

- 51 Nagarjuna, at the conclusion of his *Method of Meditation in the Phase of Creation of the Guhyasamaja*, provides the following summary of the steps of the four branches:

Familiarization consists of initial dwelling (*thog mar gnas pa*), focusing on great compassion (*snying rje chen po la dmigs pa*), meditation on the wheel of protection (*srung ba'i 'khor lo bsgom pa*), focusing on emptiness (*stong nyid la dmigs pa*), creation of the place (*sa'i cha bskyed pa*), creation of the celestial palace (*gzhal yas khang bskyed pa*), mandala arrangement (*dkyil 'khor dgod pa*), and entering the ultimate mandala (*don dam pa'i dkyil 'khor la 'jug pa*).

Near attainment consists of arising (*ldang ba*) from the ultimate mandala, visualizing the sun disk (*nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor la dmigs pa*), visualizing the moon disk (*zla ba'i dkyil 'khor la dmigs pa*), creation of Great Vajradhara (*rdo rje 'chang chen po bskyed pa*), and filling one's body with the blessing of mantras (*sngags kyi byin gyis brlabs pas phung po la sogs pa dgang ba*) (i.e., the body mandala).

Attainment consists of the consecration of awakened body, voice, and mind (*sku gsung thugs kyi byin gyis brlabs pa*), the procedure for blessing vajra and lotus (*rdo rje dang pad ma 'dus byas pa*), and being blessed by the vajra of passion (*rjes su chags pa'i rdo rje byin gyis brlabs pa*).

Great attainment consists of the emanation of the deities of the mandala (*dkyil 'khor phyung ba*), the subtle yoga (*phra mo'i sbyor ba*), vajra recitation (*rdo rje'i bzlas pa*), verbal recitation (*ngag gi bzlas pa*), entering the ultimate (*don dam la zbugs pa*), manifesting after being strongly urged to do so (*rab tu bskul bas bslang ba*), offering (*mchod pa*) and praise (*bstod pa byed pa*), dissolution (*nye bar bsdu ba*), and application of activation rites (*las kyi rab tu dbye ba*). These steps are set forth in Nagarjuna's *Method of Meditation in the Phase of Creation of the Guhyasamaja* (Toh. 1797), vol. Ngi, f. 15a3-7.

For the procedure of the creation phase of the Guhyasamaja according to the Arya tradition, see Nagabodhi's *Stages in the Presentation of the Guhyasamaja Sadhana* (Toh. 1809); Vibhūticandra's *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Brief Sadhana* (Toh. 1832); and Lilavajra's *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Abridged Phase* (Toh. 1836).

- 52 In this tradition, the branch of familiarization (*bsnyen pa, seva*) includes preliminary practices such as taking refuge and forming the resolve to awaken; visualization of a wheel of protection with ten wrathful deities; and consecration of the place through meditation on emptiness and generation of vajra fence and tent. One imagines that in the middle of the tent is a white tetrahedron (*dharmodaya*) with a multicolored lotus in the center and in the space above the lotus, the configurations of wind, fire, water, and earth, one upon the other. On the vajra ground, a unification of the configurations of the four elements, stands a syllable from which manifests a celestial palace with the lotus seats where the deities will be positioned. In the middle of the palace, one arises instantaneously as Guhyasamaja, surrounded by all the various deities of the retinue. One draws all sentient beings of the universe into the mandala, where they are purified, initiated, and transformed into buddhas; thereafter, they depart to their buddha realms. By means of light from the syllable at the heart, all the deities of the mandala are absorbed into one's body, every particle of which is a buddha. Gradually, one's body as the deity dissolves into luminous clarity and emptiness, the ultimate mandala, which is the reality dimension of awakening. One recites the mantra that means "om I have an essential nature of indivisible emptiness and pristine awareness" (*om śūnyatā jñāna vajra svabhāvatmako 'haṃ*) in order to stabilize understand-

ing of that nature. This represents the first awakening, awakening by means of essential reality (*de bzhin nyid la byang chub pa*) (a summary of Nagarjuna's *Brief Sadhana*, Toh. 1796, vol. Ngi, ff. 1a3-3b4). See also Kongtrul's *Sadhana of the Glorious Guhyasamaja of the Marpa Tradition: The Lamp of Union* for the numerous visualizations and details preliminary to the actual familiarization that are not explicit in the Indian texts but are included in the Tibetan sadhanas of Guhyasamaja, presumably derived from oral traditions.

- 53 Ekadarshanirgosha explains that this branch, which includes the steps from the creation of the place up to the meditation on the ultimate mandala, is called "familiarization" because one focuses on the state of awakening and familiarizes with it through meditation. Since it is the meditation on the ultimate mandala that precedes near attainment and the other branches, it is also called "the initial branch, that of the awakening that is emptiness" (Ekadarshanirgosha's *Esoteric Instructions on the Stages of the Path of Great Vajradhara: Secret Nectar*, Toh. 1823, vol. Ngi, f. 267a2-3).
- 54 In this branch of near attainment (*nye bar sgrub pa, upasādhana*), through the steps of the last four of the five awakenings, one manifests as the causal Guhyasamaja. For this, one visualizes, on a lotus in empty space, a black syllable *hum* that changes into a sun disk, and a white *om* that changes into a moon disk. On the moon is a red syllable *ah* that turns into a lotus, on which are the three syllables, *om, hum, ah*, one above the other. The syllables, lotus, sun, along with the entire universe, dissolve into the moon. Everything is simply mind in the aspect of a moon disk. One utters the specified mantra. This represents awakening by means of the moon (*zla ba las byang chub pa*). Next, on the moon appear instantaneously the three syllables *om, hum, ah*. This represents awakening by means of seed-syllables (*sa bon las byang chub pa*). Light radiating from the three syllables invites all buddhas in the forms of the five primordial buddhas. As the buddhas merge into the syllables, the syllables change into a vajra. One utters the specified mantra. This represents the awakening by means of the insignia (*phyag mtshan las byang chub pa*). The vajra transforms into Guhyasamaja, with one face and two arms holding bell and vajra, sitting crossed-legged on a moon. This is the awakening by means of the full manifestation of the form (*sku rdzogs pa las byang chub pa*).

The next step consists in transforming oneself into an emanation-body form. For that, one imagines that all buddhas, dwelling in the contemplation that realizes the welfare of beings through emanation bodies, project forms of Akshobhya to fill the universe. As a result, all beings, blessed by Akshobhya, attain the state of bliss. Thereafter, all the forms of Akshobhya merge into a single Akshobhya, who enters oneself, whereupon one transforms into a blue emanation form of Vajrasattva, with three faces and six arms.

To create the mandala of the awakened body (*sku dkyil, kāya maṇḍala*) as the mandala of residence and resident deities, one meditates that the various parts of one's body are the elements that form the celestial palace, the mandala of residence. One's psychophysical constituents—the aggregates, elements, sense powers, sense objects, joints, nerves, gateways of the senses, arms, mouth, reproductive organs, shoulders, knees, crown of the head, and soles of the feet—transform into the thirty-two resident deities, from Vairocana at the head to Sumbharaja at the soles of the feet. For this, one first visualizes the seed-syllables of these deities at the different places of the body, which then transform into the deities themselves (a summary of Kongtrul's *Sadhana*

of the *Glorious Guhyasamaja of the Marpa Tradition: The Lamp of Union*, ff. 11b1-12b5). Concerning the source of the near-attainment practices, see Nagarjuna's *Brief Sadhana* (Toh. 1796), vol. Ngi, ff. 3b4-4b3.

- 55 The expression “enjoyment dimension of mantras” (*sngags kyi longs spyod sku*) refers to the body mandala as actualized in the phase of creation. It is known as being “of mantras” because it is created by placing the various syllables of these deities in different points of the body, right down to the soles of the feet. This dimension closely resembles the “enjoyment dimension of pristine awareness” (*ye shes longs spyod sku*), which is actualized in the phase of completion, so called because it manifests, not from syllables, but from pristine awareness itself.
- 56 “Sense fields” (*skye mched, āyatana*) refers to the visualization of deities in the senses of the main deity. (An alternative perspective is found in Wayman's *Yoga of the Guhyasamaja*, p. 158.)

Ekadarshanirgosha explains that this branch of near attainment includes the steps from the moment one arises from the ultimate mandala up to the creation, or attainment, of the pledge-being of Great Vajradhara. Since there is full manifestation of the image of the deity from the seeds of the three syllables, it is also called “the second branch, the arising from seed-syllables” (Ekadarshanirgosha's *Esoteric Instructions on the Stages of the Path of Great Vajradhara: Secret Nectar*, Toh. 1823, vol. Ngi, f. 267a3-4).

- 57 For the branch of attainment (*sgrub pa, sādhana*), one first blesses the three “gateways” (body, speech, and mind) by visualizing the three syllables *om*, *ah*, *hum* at the three places (i.e., crown of the head, throat, and heart). From *om* emanate infinite forms of Lochana that fill space and invite the deities of Vairocana, the vajra body. Light from the union of Lochana and the chief of the vajra body, Vairocana, and from the unions of members of their retinue enters oneself and confers the power of the bodies of all buddhas. One repeats the visualizations but with different syllables (*ah* for speech at the throat, *hum* for mind at the heart) and different blessing deities (Pandara and Amitabha for speech; Mamaki and Akshobhya for mind) to bless speech and mind. At the end, one's body, speech, and mind are viewed as the natures of awakened body, speech, and mind (a summary of Kongtrul's *Sadhana of the Glorious Guhyasamaja of the Marpa Tradition: The Lamp of Union*, ff. 12b5-13b5.)

The *Sadhana of the Glorious Guhyasamaja* describes the three beings as they are visualized in this branch: The pledge-being is oneself imagined as Guhyasamaja with three faces and six arms, fully adorned. The pristine-awareness being is a red form, with one face and two arms, holding vajra and bell and embracing consort, present on a lotus and moon in the heart of Guhyasamaja. The contemplation-being is in the form of a black syllable *hum*, resembling a great flame, in the center of a vajra that stands upright in the heart of the pristine-awareness being. In a lock of hair on one's head is the lord of the family, Great Vajradhara, white, embracing his consort Vajradhatvishvari (ff. 13b5-14a3).

The passion (*rjes chags*) generated by the union of the male and female deity is that of nondual great bliss (*gnyis su med pa'i bde ba chen po*) (Vitapada's *Explanation of the Sadhana of the Four Branches, called Samantabhadri*, Toh. 1872, vol. Ni, f. 144b2).

For details of this branch, see Nagarjuna's *Brief Sadhana* (Toh. 1796), vol. Ngi, ff.

4b3-6a2; Kongtrul's *Sadhana of the Glorious Guhyasamaja of the Marpa Tradition: The Lamp of Union*, f. 14a3-b7; and Sertok Lozang Tsultrim's *Presentation of the Stages and Paths of the Indestructible Way: The Jewel Staircase*, pp. 109-110.

- 58 The expression "lords of mantras" (*sngags kyi bdag po, mantrarāja*) is an epithet found in the *Indestructible Garland Tantra* for the three syllables *om*, *ah*, and *hum*, the symbols of the body, speech, and mind of an awakened one.
 - 59 Offerings (*mchod pa*) here are performed in a special way. Through union with a consort, the moon-like vital essence in all parts of the body melts and spreads throughout the body. As a result, all the deities of the body mandala are satiated with bliss. The vital essence descends like nectar in the lotus of the consort, and by means of a mantra, becomes an offering for all buddhas (Kongtrul's *Sadhana of the Glorious Guhyasamaja of the Marpa Tradition*, f. 14b5-6).
 - 60 Great attainment (*sgrub pa chen po, mahāsādhana*) comprises the many steps of visualization from the making of offerings to the dissolution of the mandala. First is the creation of the mandala and resident deities in the womb of the consort (*yum gyi mkhar bskyed ba*) and their projection outside (*spros pa'i cho ga*). For this, one imagines that light radiating from one's heart invites all buddhas of the universe, who enter through the crown of one's head and, along with the deities of the body mandala, melt into vital essence. That descends through the body and enters the lotus of the consort, forming a two-part sphere of vital essence. One part becomes a celestial palace with lotus seats. The other part splits into thirty-two spheres, from which arise the thirty-two deities, each positioned on a lotus in the celestial palace. The central sphere, through a three-step creation (by means of syllables, vajra, and deity), becomes Akshobhya. He is drawn up to the heart of oneself as Guhyasamaja and from there projected outside in the forms of many emanations that fill the universe. These emanations perform the deeds of the awakened ones, such as teaching the ultimate truth and, in particular, purifying sentient beings of the emotional affliction of aversion and establishing them in the state of Akshobhya. Thereafter, all the emanations merge into a single one that is the primordial Akshobhya. The vital essence that arises from the union of the lord of the family and his consort, who adorn the crown of one's head, empowers the pristine-awareness being, who enters and dissolves at one's heart.
- At this point, one imagines that one transforms from the peaceful deity into Vajra Aversion (Zhe sdang rdo rje). Then, the eastern sphere in the lotus of the consort, through a three-step creation (by means of syllables, wheel, and deity), becomes Vairochana. He is drawn up to the heart of oneself as Vajra Aversion, from where he is projected outside in the forms of many emanations to perform the deeds of the awakened ones. In particular, these emanations purify beings of delusion and set them in the state of Vairochana. Thereafter, all the emanations merge into a single one, the primordial Vairochana, who is empowered, as in the previous, by the lord of the family. Vairochana positions himself on the eastern side of the mandala.

In the same way, the other deities are created, projected outside, and so forth, and then position themselves in their respective places in the mandala: Ratnasambhava purifies beings of avarice, is empowered, and then takes his place in the south; Amitabha purifies beings of desire and attachment, is empowered, and takes his place in the west; and Amoghasiddhi purifies beings of jealousy, is empowered, and takes his place in the north.

The next step in the visualization is the creation of the female deities (*gshegs ma*), following the procedure done for the male deities. These consorts, after having purified sentient beings of various obstacles, take their respective places in the mandala: Lochana in the southeast; Mamaki in the southwest; Pandara in the northwest; and Tara in the northeast.

The next step is the creation of the female bodhisattvas (*byang chub sems ma*) and their projection outside in a fashion similar to the other deities. They occupy the second rim within the mandala: in the southeast is Rupavajra (Vajra of Forms); in the southwest, Shabdavarja (Vajra of Sounds); in the northwest, Ghandhavajra (Vajra of Scents); and in the northeast, Rasavajra (Vajra of Tastes). Sparshavajra (Vajra of Tangibles) dissolves into Vajra of Tangibles in the lap of Guhyasamaja.

Next is performed the creation and emanation of the male bodhisattvas (*byang chub sems dpa'*), who occupy the third rim of the mandala: Maitri purifies the nerves of all beings and settles to the right of the eastern deities. Kshitigarbha purifies the eyes and settles to the left of the eastern deities. Vajrapani purifies the ears and settles to the right of the southern deities. Khagarbha purifies the noses of all beings and settles to the left of the southern deities. Lokeshvara purifies the tongues and settles to the right of the western deities. Manjushri purifies the mental faculties and settles to the left of the western deities. Sarvanivaranavishkambhin purifies the physical faculties and settles to the right of the northern deities. Samantabhadra purifies the joints and settles to the left of the northern deities.

Next is performed the creation and emanation of the wrathful deities (*khro bo*), who, after having purified beings of various kinds of obstacles and having been empowered, take their places at the entrances and corners of the mandala: Yamantaka at the eastern entrance; Prajnantaka at the southern entrance; Padmantaka at the western entrance; Vighnantaka at the northern entrance; Achala at the southeastern corner; Takkiraja at the southwestern corner; Niladanda at the northwestern corner; Mahabala at the northeastern corner; Ushnishachakravartin at the zenith; and Sumbharaja at the nadir.

Once the projection of the deities from the womb is complete, the celestial palace is drawn up to the heart and is projected outside in many emanations that pervade the universe and purify and transform it into a celestial palace. Then, all the emanations of the celestial palace merge into one and are absorbed into one's own celestial palace.

The next step is the yoga of the subtle sphere (*phra thig*). This procedure is twofold: the upper-door practice and the lower-door. For the upper-door practice, first, at the tip of the nose of oneself as the main deity, one visualizes a tiny sphere of vital essence and within it the entire mandala of residence and residents. Second, at the tip of the nose on a tiny moon disk, one visualizes a vajra. From this emanate vajras that pervade space and then converge. For the lower-door practice, one visualizes a tiny blue luminous sphere in the cavity of the tip of the sex organ. That sphere is projected into the consort's womb where it transforms into the entire mandala with Akshobhya as the main figure. Infinite mandalas emanate from that mandala and are then withdrawn. One repeats the same procedure with the mandalas of the other families.

Thereafter, one performs vajra recitation (*rdo rje bzlas pa*) and, when that is completed, the various methods of verbal recitation of the mantra (*bzlas pa'i cho ga*). Once the recitation step is finished, the three beings—pledge-being, pristine-awareness being, and contemplation-being—dissolve into a *nada*, and that, into luminous clar-

ity. At this point, the four consorts, beginning with Lochana, who symbolize the four boundless qualities (*tshad med pa rnam pa bzhi*), distressed at not seeing their lord, urge him with songs to reappear from emptiness. Due to the force of altruistic commitment, Guhyasamaja re-emerges in a body whose nature is the union of the three beings and receives praise (*bstod pa*) and various offerings (*mchod pa*).

The final step consists in the dissolution of the mandala of the deities (*dkyil 'khor gyi 'khor lo bsdus pa*). For this, light from the two main deities emanates forth, empowering all beings, purifying them, and transforming them all into *hum* syllables, which fill all of space. These are drawn into oneself by the light, whereupon one remains for a period of time in the state of essential reality. Thereafter, one arises as the simple form of Guhyasamaja, with one face and two arms, with the three syllables at the places of the three gateways (body, speech, and mind), and engages in post-meditation conduct with understanding of the essential sameness of all phenomena and the natures of one's gateways (a summary of Kongtrul's *Sadhana of the Glorious Guhyasamaja of the Marpa Tradition*, ff. 14b7-26a4). For further elucidation, see Ratnakarashanti's *Commentary on the Brief Sadhana: Garland of Jewels* (Toh. 1826), vol. Ci, ff. 50b6-76a1.

- 61 As mentioned in the previous note, the expression “three beings” (*sems pa gsum*), or “three heroes” (*sems dpa' gsum*), refers to the pledge-being (*dam tshig sems pa, samayasattva*), the pristine-awareness being (*ye shes sems pa, jñānasattva*), and the contemplation-being (*ting nge 'dzin sems pa, samādhisattva*). In this context, the pledge-being means one's own nature visualized as the deity Guhyasamaja. The pristine-awareness being is the actual deity, visualized as a form minute in size, red in color, positioned in the heart of oneself as the pledge-being. The contemplation-being is the syllable *hum*, radiating five-colored light, visualized at the heart of the pristine-awareness being.

As to the meaning of the terms, the pledge-being refers to the abode where a pristine-awareness deity is drawn in and then projected outside. Also known as the “pledge hero” (*dam tshig sems dpa'*), this being is “heroic” (*dpa'*) with respect to pledges (*dam tshig*) and the welfare of beings. The pristine-awareness hero (*ye shes sems dpa'*) is so called because this being's nature is pristine (*ye*) awareness (*she*). The contemplation hero (*ting nge 'dzin sems dpa'*) is so called because focusing on this being produces an unshakeable, undivided contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin*) of innate bliss, the result of which is the blazing of pristine awareness and the conquest of emotional afflictions (Sertok Lozang Tsultrim's *Presentation of the Stages and Paths of the Indestructible Way: The Jewel Staircase*, p. 108).

In the Guhyasamaja system, where the term “mantras” (*sngags*) is often used to mean deities (*lha*), the three beings are called “one's own mantras” (*rang sngags*) or “one's deities.” See also Wayman's discussion in *Yoga of the Guhyasamaja*, p. 32 and pp. 250-251; and Sertok Lozang Tsultrim's *Presentation of the Stages and Paths*, p. 109.

On the natures of the pledge-being and the pristine-awareness being, see Kongtrul's *Manual for the Performance of Retreat on the Tantras of the Marpa Tradition*, ff. 41b2-42b3.

- 62 Crowning by the lord of the family (*rigs bdag dbu brgyan pa'i bya ba byed*) or being sealed by the lord of the family (*rigs bdag gi rgyas gdab pa*) involves imagining the lord on the crown of the main male deity and on that of the consort, as well as on the crowns of all retinue deities. The lords of the families are the buddhas of the five

families: Amoghasiddhi is the lord of the sword (*ral gri*, *khadga*) or action family (*las kyi rigs*, *karmakula*); Ratnasambhava, lord of the jewel (*rin po che*, *ratna*) family; Amitabha, lord of the lotus (*pad ma*, *padma*) family; Vairochana, lord of the wheel (*'khor lo*, *cakra*) family; and Vajrasattva and Akshobhya, lords of the vajra (*rdo rje*, *vajra*) family. The lord who crowns a particular deity may differ from one tantra to the next and in some cases not be one of the buddhas of the five families.

In the *Sadhana of the Glorious Guhyasamaja of the Marpa Tradition*, Kongtrul describes Guhyasamaja as being crowned by white Vajradhara in union with his consort, white Vajradhatvishvari. Akshobhya, the central figure of the mandala created in the womb, is crowned by Vajrasattva as the lord of the family; and Vairochana, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, and Amoghasiddhi are crowned by Akshobhya. As for their consorts, Lochana is crowned by Vairochana; Mamaki, by Akshobhya; Pandara, by Amitabha; and Tara, by Amoghasiddhi. As for the bodhisattvas, Maitri and Kshitigarbha are crowned by Vairochana; Vajrapani and Khagarbha, by Ratnasambhava; Lokeshvara and Manjushri, by Amitabha; and Sarvanivaranavishkambhin and Samantabhadra, by Amoghasiddhi. As for the wrathful deities, Yamantaka is crowned by Vairochana; Prajnantaka, by Ratnasambhava; Padmantaka, by Amitabha; Vighnantaka, by Vajrasattva; Achala, by Vairochana; Takkiraja, by Ratnashri; Niladanda, by Vajradharma; Mahabala, by Amoghasiddhi; and Ushnisha and Sumbharaja, by Akshobhya (a summary of ff. 14a2-19b3).

In the specific case of the Kalachakra, for the retinue deities, the color of the deity indicates the family and therefore the lord. For a black or blue deity, the lord would be Amoghasiddhi; for a red deity, Ratnasambhava; for a white, Amitabha; for a yellow, Vairochana; and for a green, Akshobhya. See Kedrup Norzang Gyatso's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 180b6-182b7.

- 63 The tenth chapter of the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* is called Exhortation of the Minds of All Transcendent Ones (*de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi thugs bskul ba*). This chapter explains the practice to exhort the mind or “essence” of the deities, which is intended for yogins who have gained experience through the elaborate, unelaborate, and extremely unelaborate tantric activities but have not yet attained powers (Chandrakirti's *Illuminating Lamp*, Toh. 1785, vol. Ha, f. 70b1).

As to the meaning of “essence” (*snying po*), Nagarjuna explains that all mantras represent all buddhas. Their essence (*snying po*) is that of pristine-awareness beings. The essence of a pristine-awareness being is a contemplation-being (in the form of a syllable). To “exhort” that essence means to “steal” their power (*Tantric Commentary on the Glorious Guhyasamaja Tantra*, Toh. 1784, vol. Sa, f. 142a7-b1).

The contemplation-beings are the three syllables *om*, *ah*, and *hum*, which represent awakened body, speech, and mind, respectively. According to Nagarjuna, the three syllables, which can overpower the effects of wrathful mantras, contain the essence of all kinds of mantras. Thus, *om*, *ah*, and *hum* form the mantra that “exhorts the essence.” The procedure for such exhortation consists of several steps of visualization, which the practitioner undertakes for a certain period of time. These steps are alluded to in the root tantra and elucidated in the commentaries.

- 64 The tantric conduct of the phase of creation (*bskyed rim pa'i spyod pa*) refers in general to the entire practice of this phase. Here, however, it specifically refers to the application of methods to enhance realization in order to gain powers once the main

aspect of the creation phase has been accomplished. These methods consist primarily of enjoying sense pleasures while remaining in a state of contemplation. One engages in the three forms of conduct, namely, the elaborate (*spros bcas*), unelaborate (*spros med*), and very unelaborate (*shin tu spros med*) (see Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, English translation, p. 489, n. 39); and if those do not bring success, the fierce rite (*drag shul gyi sbyor ba*), which compels the deity to bestow mundane powers and the supreme power of awakening. This fierce rite is explained in Nagarjuna's *Tantric Commentary on the Glorious Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 1784), vol. Sa, f. 314a1-4. See also Dipamkarabhadra's *Large Commentary on the Lamp of All Secrets* (Toh. 1787), vol. Ha, ff. 227b3-233a5.

- 65 Here, Kongtrul is referring to miscellaneous activation rites (*las*) based on pristine awareness. These stem from four basic activations, namely, pacification or appeasement (*zhi ba*), enriching (*rgyas*), dominating (*dbang*), and fierce (*drag*). The implementation of the powers means to make use of the major and minor powers (*angos grub, siddhi*) accrued from the tantric practice, such as the eight powers (see below, Chapter 4, n. 10).
- 66 The Jnanapada tradition (*ye shes zhabs lugs*), headed by and named after Buddhashri-jnana (Jnanapada), is based on a commentarial system that includes a number of his works such as the *Sadhana called Samantabhadra* (Toh. 1855), on the subject of the phase of creation; and the *Oral Teachings of Manjushri* (Toh. 1853) and *Vital Essence of Liberation* (Toh. 1859), on the phase of completion. Of Jnanapada's students, Dipamkarabhadra wrote the *Rite of the Mandala of Guhyasamaja* (Toh. 1865) on the ritual of the phase of creation; and Vitapada wrote lengthy commentaries on the works of Buddhajnanapada. Abhayakaragupta is said to have adhered to this tradition (Wayman's *Yoga of the Guhyasamaja Tantra*, pp. 94-95).

Buddhashrijnana was born in the city of Takshashila in the region of Khabī. He lived around the time the thirty-seventh Tibetan king, Mé Aktsom, ascended the throne. An extremely learned brahmin teacher, Buddhashrijnana developed great faith in the teachings of the Buddha and entered Nalanda Monastic University to become a monk in the *mahasāṅgika* order. At that time he was given the name Buddhashrijnana. With the guidance of Haribhadra, an expert on the Transcendent Wisdom (*prajñāparamita*) scriptures, he studied the hinayana and mahayana systems, and at the request of Gunamitra, composed many works, including a commentary on the *Condensed Transcendent Wisdom Scripture*.

With a longing to study tantra, Buddhashrijnana traveled to Oddiyana where he received teachings on both its outer and inner aspects from the master Lalitavajra and the yogini Guneru, and readily achieved a deep state of contemplation. Later, Buddhashrijnana met the extraordinary master Palitapada, from whom he requested transmission of the Guhyasamaja, and remained to study with him for seven years. During this time he came to hear the tantra eighteen times. However, Buddhashrijnana was not able to grasp the true nature of reality and so left for Bodhgaya and settled in a grove called Kuva, where he practiced the tantra for many months. At the end of his retreat he received a prophecy in a vision indicating that Manjushri would dispel his obscurations.

Buddhashrijnana set off in the direction of the Five-Peaked Mountain in China to search for Manjushri. On his way, through a series of bizarre yet auspicious events, he

came to meet his most significant master, who appeared to be an eccentric old monk. After several trials Buddhashrijnana was initiated and taught the *Oral Teachings of Manjushri*. As a result, his mind became vast as the sky and he realized the profound nature of all phenomena. It is said that the old monk was actually Manjushrimitra, a disciple of Garab Dorjé.

With the intention to enhance his realization through cultivating the phases of creation and completion, he traveled to a place called Dharma Seedling where he attracted many students and scholars to whom he imparted the teachings of Manjushri. Moreover, he composed fourteen texts in accordance with the *Oral Teachings of Manjushri*. His former teacher Palitapada also requested his instructions and attained the highest realization by relying on them. After some time, Buddhashrijnana returned to the area of Bodhgaya, made himself a grass hut, and settled there. King Dharmapala (who reigned between 770 and 810), who had come to Bodhgaya to make offerings, developed an unshakeable faith in the master, asked for initiation, and offered himself as his subject. Buddhashrijnana lived for more than eighty years and died during the reign of Dharmapala. Among his disciples were also some Tibetan masters of the Nyingma tradition, including Sangyé Sangwa and Sangyé Shiwa.

The Jnanapada tradition spread widely throughout both India and Tibet. It was known to a limited extent during the first propagation of Buddhism in Tibet with the translation of Prashantamitra's commentaries and other texts. During the later propagation the tradition flourished due to the works of the great translators Rinchen Zangpo, Nyan Lotsawa Darma Drak, Nyok Lotsawa Yönten Drak, Lotsawa Yeshe Gyaltzen, and others.

- 67 Vitapada explains that these steps are considered to be minor (*chung ngu*) because they focus on only one deity (i.e., the male deity) and because their power over opposing elements is weak since they do not evoke perfect pristine awareness. They are called branches (*yan lag*) because they are not complete in themselves, each being a branch of the others, and all are necessary for the procedure to be complete. Since they bring about the attainment of the resultant vajra-holder, they are known as "result" (Vitapada's *Explanation of the Sadhana of the Four Branches, called Samantabhadri*, Toh. 1872, vol. Ni, f. 151a4-5).
- 68 Here, the causal vajra-holder refers to the deity created initially through the five awakenings; and the resultant vajra-holder, the Guhyasamaja who, upon the request made by the four goddesses, manifests again from the vital-essence form. See next note.

Sertok Lozang Tsultrim explains that owing to the passion caused by the entrance of the syllable or other symbol that represents the intermediate-state being, the deity melts into the form of vital essence. The deity is then urged by the songs of the four deities, Lochana and others, to reappear. Creation is performed in one of two ways: creation in three steps (by means of syllables and so forth); and creation by means of the five awakenings. (This description of the melting of the deity is in the context of the contemplation of initial union. According to the explanation in Nagarjuna's *Brief Sadhana* [Toh. 1796], the melting that takes place in the supremely victorious mandala is not caused by the entrance of the intermediate-state being but by one's entering luminous clarity) (Sertok Lozang Tsultrim's *Presentation of the Stages and Paths of the Indestructible Way*, p. 99).

- 69 In the practice of this system of Guhyasamaja, the mind of the intermediate-state being (*bar srid*) is imagined as the three luminous syllables *om*, *ah*, *hum*. It is this mind that, through the process of supreme familiarization, will arise as the resultant vajra-holder. The three syllables, enclosed between two red *ho* syllables, are imagined to enter one's mouth from the space in front, to flow downward through the vajra, and to enter the lotus of the consort. Due to the great passion of the consort, the five syllables melt into red light. This light causes oneself and the consort to melt into a moon seat of seminal fluid. It is at this point that the four goddesses urge one to arise as the resultant vajra-holder for the benefit of beings. Imagining oneself in the form of the resultant vajra-holder, one says the mantra specified in the instructions. This set of steps is known as "what produces a minor result that is concordant with the cause" or "the minor branch of familiarization" (a summary of Vitapada's *Explanation of the Sadhana of the Four Branches, called Samantabhadri*, Toh. 1872, vol. Ni, ff. 145b6-148b2).
- 70 Consecration of the sense fields (*skye mched byin gyis brlabs pa*) consists in the creation of deities in the sense organs. To perform this, at each eye one visualizes a white syllable *kshim* on a moon, which transforms into a wheel marked with the same syllable at its center. Light radiating from the wheel transforms all buddhas of the universe into forms of Ksitigarbha (resembling Vairochana), who are then absorbed into both eyes, transforming the wheel into the deity. Similarly, at each ear is imagined a black syllable *dzim*, which transforms into a vajra and that into Vajrapani (resembling Akshobhya); at each nostril, a yellow syllable *kham*, which transforms into a jewel and that into Khagarbha (resembling Ratnasambhava); at the center of the tongue, a red syllable *gam*, which turns into a lotus and that into Lokeshvara (resembling Amitabha); at the center of the forehead, a green syllable *ksham*, which turns into a sword and that into Sarvanivaranavishkambhin (resembling Amoghasiddhi); and at the navel, a white syllable *sam*, which turns into a vajra and that into Samantabhadra (resembling Vajrasattva). All of the organs thereby become omniscient. This set of steps is known as "what produces a minor result related to the resultant senses" or "the minor branch of near attainment" (a summary of Vitapada's *Explanation of the Sadhana of the Four Branches, called Samantabhadri*, Toh. 1872, vol. Ni, ff. 148b3-149a3).
- 71 For this branch, one visualizes at one's heart a moon with a syllable *hum*, which transforms into a vajra marked by that syllable. The vajra and syllable transform into Akshobhya, Vajra Mind, with the same syllable at the heart. Akshobhya is of the nature of the great seal, the dimension of reality inclusive of all the qualities of immaculate pristine awareness, from mindfulness to omniscience. At the throat is visualized *ah* on a moon, which transforms into a lotus marked by that syllable. Then, the lotus and syllable transform into Amitabha, Vajra Speech, with the same syllable on a moon at the heart. Amitabha is of the nature of the seal of the teachings, the enjoyment dimension of awakening adorned with the major and minor signs, who shares the enjoyment of the teachings with bodhisattvas on the ten stages of awakening. At the head is visualized the syllable *om* on a moon, which transforms into a wheel marked by that syllable. The wheel and syllable transform into Vairochana, Vajra Body, with the same syllable at the heart. Vairochana is of the nature of the action seal, the manifest dimension of awakening, who fulfills the wishes of beings. Light emanating from the three syllables at the hearts of the three deities carries goddesses such as Vajra of Forms who make

offerings to all the awakened beings of the universe and request that one be consecrated as awakened body, voice, and mind. Then, from the heart, throat, and crown of the head of every buddha are emanated the deities of Vajra Mind, Vajra Speech, and Vajra Body. These deities are absorbed into one's three gateways and become indivisible from them. In this way, one receives the consecrations. Since these steps lead to attainment of the manifest dimension of awakening, and so forth, they constitute what is called "the branch of attainment." With attainment of the manifest dimension, and so forth, comes the capacity to ripen and liberate sentient beings, an attainment known as "the result related to a person's activity." Since these steps serve as the cause of that attainment, the set of steps is known as "what produces the minor result of the person's activity" or "the minor branch of attainment" (a summary of Vitapada's *Explanation of the Sadhana of the Four Branches, called Samantabhadri*, Toh. 1872, vol. Ni, ff. 149a3-150a7).

Vitapada explains that the "lords of all" (*thams cad kyi bdag po*), which represent the indestructible states of the awakened bodies, voices, and minds, are devoid of the conceptual characteristics of apprehended and apprehender and, like space, pervade everything. That possibly is the reason why they are called "lords of all." See Vitapada's *Explanation of the Sadhana of the Four Branches, called Samantabhadri*, Toh. 1872, vol. Ni, f. 150b1.

- 72 The three-beings placement refers to the configuration of the pledge-being, contemplation-being, and pristine-awareness being.

At this point, one visualizes a moon disk in the area of the heart with the specified syllable above it. That transforms into the deity's insignia, which transforms into the pristine-awareness being, in a form like that of the pledge-being, the deity in whose form one imagines oneself. At the heart of the pristine-awareness being, one visualizes a syllable on a moon that transforms into the insignia marked by that syllable. Light radiating from the insignia and syllable summons all the buddhas. Thus urged, the buddhas emanate light rays whose tips bear goddesses, Lochana and others, holding vases and singing auspicious words. The goddesses pour water on one's head, thereby conferring initiation (*dbang bskur*). The water overflowing from the top of the head becomes Akshobhya, the lord of the family, resting on the crown of one's head. This is the sealing (*rgyas gdab*).

In the previous branch, there is attainment of the three dimensions of awakening (*sku gsum*) but not initiation. These steps empower one as a monarch of the teachings whose influence encompasses the three worlds and are therefore known as "great attainment." Through the initiation, impurities are removed and, as the stainless result of that purification, the lord of the family manifests. Thus, the set of steps is known as "what produces the minor stainless result," or "the minor branch of great attainment" (a summary of Vitapada's *Explanation of the Sadhana of the Four Branches, called Samantabhadri*, Toh. 1872, vol. Ni, ff. 150a7-151a3).

- 73 The central female deity is visualized in the minor branches but not as the main focus. In the intermediate branches, the consort (*rig ma*) becomes the special focus of purification. Vitapada explains that first the consort is created in the same manner as the central male deity: one visualizes a moon seat in front of oneself with the three syllables above it. All buddhas are invited and then absorbed into the three syllables, whereupon another moon appears above the first, and so forth. Thus, through the

sequence of five awakenings, the consort manifests. The three syllables (symbolic of the intermediate-state being) enter her mouth, and she dissolves into vital essence. The four goddesses urge her to reappear. As a result, the vital essence transforms into the specified syllable, which transforms into the insignia marked by the same syllable, and finally that transforms into the consort. This is the branch of familiarization in the intermediate procedure.

Then, for the branch of near attainment, the sense fields of the consort are consecrated by imagining Kshitigarbha and the other deities in them.

For the branch of attainment, the consort's three gateways are consecrated as indestructible body, speech, and mind.

For the branch of great attainment, the consort receives the initiation.

Once the four branches are completed, the consort is consecrated. This is done by visualizing a white syllable *om* at the head of the consort, which represents the lord of the family of awakened body. From that syllable, countless replicas emanate and fill the body of the consort from breast level to the top of the body. Likewise, one imagines a black syllable *hum* at the consort's heart, the lord of the family of awakened mind, from which countless replicas emanate and fill the body from the navel up; a yellow syllable *sva* at her navel, the lord of the jewel family, from which countless replicas emanate and fill the body from the waist up; a red syllable *ah* at the center of her secret place, the lord of the lotus family, from which countless replicas spread to fill the body from the waist down; and a green syllable *ha* in the central portion of each thigh, the lord of the action family, from which countless replicas emanate and fill the body up to the soles of the feet. Thus, the consort, blazing with light, is consecrated as the natures of the buddhas of the five families. Thereafter the lotus of the consort and the vajra of the male deity are consecrated (transformed) according to the instructions. This comprises what is called "the initial contemplation" (a summary of Vitapada's *Explanation of the Sadhana of the Four Branches, called Samantabhadri*, Toh. 1872, vol. Ni, ff. 151a5-152b4).

74 The supremely victorious mandala (*dkyil 'khor rgyal mchog, vijaya maṇḍala*). See above, Chapter 2, n. 16.

75 For the branch of familiarization in the major procedure, one imagines that, owing to the passion of the main male and female deities, all buddhas merge with oneself and transform into spheres of vital essence. These become the mandala and resident deities in the womb of the consort, who are then emanated and positioned in the external mandala. Having done that, in order to consecrate the mandala of the deities just created, one invites the pristine-awareness mandala to merge with the visualized one.

For the branch of near attainment, the sense organs of all the retinue deities of the mandala are consecrated by placing in them the respective deities.

For the branch of attainment, the three gateways of all the deities of the retinue are consecrated as the indestructible states of awakened body, speech, and mind; and the pristine-awareness beings are drawn in.

For the branch of great attainment, all the deities of the retinue are empowered and sealed with the crown ornament, the lord of their respective family.

Because these branches possess perfect pristine awareness, their power over opposing elements is great, and thus they are called "major branches" (a summary of Vitapada's *Explanation of the Sadhana of the Four Branches, called Samantabhadri*, Toh. 1872, vol. Ni, ff. 152b5-158b2).

- 76 For a detailed discussion of the four branches according to the Jnanapada tradition, which have been summarized in the text and in the preceding notes, see Jnanapada's *Sadhana called Samantabhadra* (Toh. 1855, vol. Di); Jnanapada's *Sadhana of the Four Branches, called Samantabhadri* (Toh. 1856, vol. Di); and Vitapada's *Explanation of the Sadhana of the Four Branches, called Samantabhadri* (Toh. 1872, vol. Ni).
- 77 Kedrup Norzang Gyatso explains how the features of the four branches correspond to the process of growth of the body beginning with conception. The branch of familiarization, that of the vajra body, consists of the contemplation of the supremely victorious mandala, corresponding to the formation of the body in the womb. The branch of near attainment, the vajra speech, is the contemplation of the supremely victorious action, corresponding to birth and the functioning of the faculties following birth. The branch of attainment, the vajra mind, is the yoga of vital essence (*thig le rnal 'byor, binduyoga*), corresponding to the spreading of the vital essence (*thig le spro ba*). The branch of great attainment, the vajra pristine awareness, is the subtle yoga (*phra mo'i rnal 'byor*), corresponding to the capacity to experience orgasm by the age of sixteen (Kedrup Norzang Gyatso's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, f. 139a3-5).
- According to the Kalachakra, in the human male, the white vital essence (*kham s dkar po*) functions as semen (*khu ba*) by the age of sixteen, and in the female, the red vital essence (*kham s dmar po*) functions as ovum (*khrag*) by the age of twelve; hence, the reference to the initial experience of orgasm occurring by age sixteen. This could also be related to the symbology of the number sixteen, which externally stands for the apex of the waxing phase of the moon and the beginning of the waning moon, and internally to the apex of the descent of semen before being released or withheld depending on one's training.
- 78 The four gateways, or means, to freedom (*rnam thar sgo bzhi, vimokṣa*) are the three gateways of emptiness (*stong pa nyid, śūnyatā*), signlessness (*mtshan ma med pa, animitta*), and wishlessness (*smon pa med pa, apranihita*), plus the fourth gateway, that of the unconditioned (*rmngon par 'dus ma byas pa, anabhisaṃskāra*). Emptiness means that all phenomena are primordially of the nature of the unborn (*ma skyes ba ngo bo nyid*). Signlessness means that all phenomena are devoid of any conceptual characteristics (*mtshan ma dang bral ba*). Wishlessness means that the nature of things cannot be expressed or pointed out. The unconditioned means that all things are possessed of the nature of nonconceptuality. See Nagarjuna's *Large Commentary on the Eighteenth Chapter of the Guhyasamaja*, f. 299b1-7.
- 79 See above, Chapter 3, section entitled "The System of the Net of Magical Manifestation."
- 80 Although the body in the womb is completely formed nine lunar months after conception, the winds of the five elements, or ten winds—the life wind, the downward-voiding wind, and so forth—are still confined within the central channel and do not flow through the upper and lower doors. In the tenth lunar month, these winds start to move, the result of which is childbirth. Corresponding to this process, four goddesses urge Kalachakra and his consort, who have melted into vital essence, to reappear.

The melting of the deities into vital essence is imagined as follows: At the forehead of oneself as Kalachakra is the syllable *om*; at the throat, *ah*; and at the heart, *hum*;

at the navel, *ho*; and at the crown of the head, *ho*. The inner fire of *ho* at the navel of Kalachakra blazes with the light of pristine awareness, generating great bliss in the deity and causing Kalachakra and his consort to melt into the fluid of bodhichitta. (At this point, the deities have melted into the bodhichitta that has the potency for birth, but their state is that of the bodhichitta that is absorption in emptiness, the non-manifest aspect.)

As for the step of urging the re-emergence of the deities with songs, the four goddesses who sing songs to urge Kalachakra and consort to manifest again for the welfare of beings are Lochana, Mamaki, Pandara, and Tara. These goddesses are in essence the four elements of earth, water, fire, and wind, respectively, and the four boundless qualities of equanimity, joy, compassion, and love, and they correspond to the winds that instigate the birth of the child from the womb.

As a result of their urging, Kalachakra, who has been fully absorbed in the dimension of emptiness, is awakened, and knows all beings to be illusions. From the fluid of bodhichitta arises a blue syllable *hum*; from that, a five-pointed blue vajra; and from that, the form of Kalachakra, with faces, arms, and so forth. This emerging of the form of the main deity corresponds to birth from a womb. That is followed by the emanation of the mandalas, corresponding to the winds of the newborn first engaging with the outside world through the senses. For the details of this process, see Kedrup Norzang Gyatso's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 174a1-178a5.

- 81 In the Kalachakra phase of creation, after the emanation of the mandalas, the pristine-awareness beings are drawn in by the wrathful deity called Vajravega, who is in nature the purity of pristine-awareness wind (*ye shes kyi rlung*). Vajravega is emanated from the lotus of the consort of Kalachakra. This corresponds to the initial flowing of pristine-awareness wind in the central channel of the newborn, which awakens the sense powers and allows the six sense consciousnesses to perceive the outside world.

The emanated Vajravega uses his hook to pierce the navel of Kalachakra, the main deity of the pristine-awareness beings, and his lasso, to bind his twenty-four hands and draw him in, along with the other deities of the mandala. At the end, Vajravega dissolves into the heart of the main deity. This procedure corresponds to the life wind emerging from the navel channel-wheel immediately after birth, directing the sense consciousnesses to their objects, and then returning to the navel channel-wheel.

The assembly of pristine-awareness beings are presented with offerings. Then, the four wrathful protectors cause the pristine-awareness beings to be absorbed into the pledge-beings of the mandala, and to be bound, delighted, and united in a single taste. These four wrathful deities symbolize the consciousnesses of the eye, body, tongue, and nose of the newborn. For the details of this procedure, see Kedrup Norzang Gyatso's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 178a5-180b6.

- 82 The Kalachakra tantra explains the yoga of vital essence (*thig le'i rnal 'byor*, *binduyoga*) as the yoga of bliss and emptiness applied to the four joys, the branch that realizes vajra mind. It refers to practice with a qualified human consort or an imaginary one, whereby the white vital essence present in the head in the shape of the syllable *ham* descends to the secret place where it is held. Knowledge of emptiness is joined with the experience of the four joys. In this practice, the four joys are experienced in the forward order: initial joy (*dang po'i dga' ba*, *prathamānanda*) as the vital essence reaches the throat; supreme joy (*mchog dga'*, *paramānanda*) as it reaches the heart; special joy

(*khyad par dga' ba, viramānanda*) as it reaches the navel; and innate joy (*lhan cig skyes pa'i dga' ba, saḥajānanda*) as it reaches the tip of the sex organ.

The subtle yoga (*phra mo'i rnal 'byor, sūksmayoga*) is explained as the yoga of bliss and emptiness arising from the four joys mixed with emptiness, the branch that realizes vajra pristine awareness. It refers to practice that causes the white vital essence that has descended in fluid form to be drawn upward to the same locations. In this practice, the four joys are experienced in the reverse order: joy, as the vital essence ascends from the tip of the sex organ and reaches the navel; supreme joy, as it reaches the heart; special joy, as it reaches the throat; and innate joy, as it reaches the forehead. See Kedrup Norzang Gyatso's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 191b7-196b7.

- 83 This citation is found in the *Black Yamari Tantra: Bodies, Voices, and Minds of All Transcendent Ones* (Toh. 467), vol. Ja, f. 150a4-5. The *Red and Black Yamari* tantras (*gShin rje gshed dmar nag gi rgyud*) include Toh. 467, 469, 473, 474, 475, and 478.
- 84 *Black Yamari Tantra: Bodies, Voices, and Minds of All Transcendent Ones* (Toh. 467), vol. Ja, f. 150a5-6.
- 85 Vajrasattva (rDo rje sems dpa') here stands for Yamari, the main deity of the mandala. Concerning the meaning of "concordant cause" (*rgyu mthun pa*), Ratnakarashantipa states that the indivisible union of wisdom and method is "yoga." The form of the deity concordant with that is "subsequent yoga," like a son who has a face, arms, and the other physical features (Ratnakarashantipa's *Jewel Lamp Commentary on Difficult Points of the Glorious Black Yamari Tantra*, Toh. 1919, vol. Bi, f. 160a4).
- On the same point, Shridhara explains: As to the meaning of "yoga," and so forth, in this context "yoga" is what is taught in the root tantra using the words "the manifestation of Vajrasattva," and so forth. That which is of a "concordant cause" (i.e., resembling that manifestation) is the form of the deity, the subsequent yoga arising from the space of great bliss (Shridhara's *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Yamari Tantra: Illumination of the Innate*, Toh. 1918, vol. Bi, f. 119a4-5).

- 86 *Buddhasamayoga* (Toh. 366), vol. Ka.
- 87 *Secret Moon Essence* (Toh. 477), vol. Ja. This tantra is also found in the *Ancient Tradition: Collected Tantras*, vol. 16, number 210.
- 88 As initial steps, one contemplates the four boundless qualities (love, compassion, joy, and equanimity); invites the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and *yamaris* to assemble in the sky before one; pays homage, makes offerings, confesses wrong actions, rejoices in virtue, dedicates the power of virtue, takes refuge, and resolves to awaken for others' benefit. One meditates on emptiness and then creates a vajra ground and tent, a tetrahedron, and within that a lotus and vajra-cross. Above the lotus and vajra-cross is a moon with a syllable from which arises an eight-spoked wheel. That wheel transforms into Vairochana and consort, who transform into a celestial palace with an arrangement of seventeen seats.

One then appears on the central seat as Yamari by means of the five actual awakenings: First, for the awakening of the mirror-like pristine awareness, one imagines that on the lotus and moon seat are three syllables. The appearance of those syllables attracts all buddhas, who arrive and transform into the vowels and consonants of

the Sanskrit alphabet. These vowels and consonants transform into two moons, one above the other. Next is the awakening of the pristine awareness of sameness in which the two moons and three syllables merge to become one moon. Next is the awakening of the pristine awareness of discernment, for which one imagines that the moon becomes a vajra marked by a syllable and one utters the mantra that means “I am of vajra nature” (*om vajra svabhāvātmaḥ haṃ*) with the pride of being the nature of the vajra. Next, for the awakening of the all-accomplishing pristine awareness, one imagines that, from the syllable, the awakened beings emanate in order to transform all sentient beings into buddhas and then dissolve back into it. One utters the mantra that means “om I am all the awakened ones” (*om sarva tathāgata haṃ*) with the pride of being of the nature of all awakened ones. Finally, for the awakening of the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena, light emanating from the syllable invokes all the awakened beings in the form of Yamari, who then dissolve into the syllable. That syllable, together with the vajra, becomes the main deity embracing consort (a summary of Ratnakarashantipa’s *Sadhana of the Black Yamari: Blossoming of the Kumuda Flower*, Toh. 1935, vol. Mi, ff. 58b7-59b3).

There are alternative versions of the five awakenings in the context of the Yamari tantra. For example, Shridhara states that transformation of the vowels and consonants into the two moons is the mirror-like pristine awareness. The merging of the two moons into one moon is the pristine awareness of sameness, the second aspect. The syllable arising from the moon is the pristine awareness of discernment, the third aspect. The vajra arising from the syllable is the all-accomplishing pristine awareness, the fourth aspect. The Vajradhara (i.e., Black Yamari) arising from that vajra is the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena, the fifth aspect (a summary of Shridhara’s *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Yamari Tantra: Illumination of the Innate*, Toh. 1918, vol. Bi, f. 118a1-2).

- 89 Kongtrul is likely referring to Ratnakarashantipa’s words found in his *Jewel Lamp Commentary on Difficult Points of the Black Yamari Tantra* (Toh. 1919, vol. Bi, f. 160a4) (see above, Chapter 3, n. 85). The five yogas (*rnal ’byor lnga*) mentioned here may refer to the five awakenings.
- 90 Ratnakarashantipa describes the subsequent yoga as follows: Having generated oneself as Yamari, one imagines that light radiates from the syllable at the heart of the pristine-awareness being (a black Akshobhya) at one’s heart, and transforms all beings into transcendent buddhas and absorbs them into one’s body. Then, the three syllables *om*, *ab*, and *hum* (that symbolize the intermediate-state being) enter one’s mouth and exit from the sex organ in form of bodhichitta that passes into the consort’s lotus. The bodhichitta emanates red light that causes the consort’s passion to blaze; as a result, both consort and Yamari melt. From the egg-like form of the melted deities emanate four goddesses: Vajra Tsatsika (rDo rje tsa rtsi ka), Vajravahni (rDo rje phag mo), Vajra Sarasvati (rDo rje dbyangs can ma), and Vajra Kaushambi (rDo rje mdzod ldan ma). Not seeing Yamari, their lord, they become displeased and sing songs to urge his reappearance. Having made their request, the four goddesses dissolve into the egg-like form whereupon it instantly transforms into the resultant Yamari and his consort. Yamari has three faces and six arms and stands on a sun with his left leg extended. At this point, one utters the specified mantra (*om dharmadhātu svabhāvātmaḥ haṃ*) (a summary of Ratnakarashantipa’s *Sadhana of the Black Yamari: Blossoming of the Kumuda Flower*, Toh. 1935, vol. Mi, ff. 59a5-60a5).

91 In the superior yoga, one imagines that light radiating from one's heart invites all the transcendent ones. They enter through one's mouth, melting into bodhichitta, and pass into the lotus of the consort. There, the bodhichitta transforms into syllables. The syllables are emanated and positioned on seats, and then turn into insignia, which become the deities of the Black Yamari mandala: Vajra Aversion, Vajra Delusion, Vajra Avarice, Vajra Lust, Vajra Jealousy, Vajra Hammer Lady, Vajra Club Lady, Vajra Lotus Lady, Vajra Sword Lady, and the four goddess mentioned in the previous note—Vajra Tsatsika, Vajravarahi, Vajra Sarasvati, Vajra Kaushambi—plus skull cups filled with white nectar, located in the corners of the interior of the celestial palace. The uttering of the mantras of these deities causes the deities and skull cups to emanate replicas and accomplish the welfare of beings. Then they return and place themselves on their respective seats (a summary of Ratnakarashantipa's *Sadhana of the Black Yamari: Blossoming of the Kumuda Flower*, Toh. 1935, vol. Mi, ff. 60a6-61b1).

92 See Shridhara's *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Yamari Tantra: Illumination of the Innate*, Toh. 1918, vol. Bi, f. 119a4; and Shridhara's *Sadhana of the Black Yamari*, Toh. 1923, vol. Mi, ff. 1-8.

93 The emanation of the retinue is followed by consecration of the eyes, and so forth, of the deities. The consecration of the sense fields consists in visualization of deities at the sense organs and in two other places, usually the head or forehead and the navel. Kamalarakrita's *Sadhana of the Black Yamari* describes the procedure for consecration in this system: One imagines that at the eyes is the syllable *kshim*, from which arises Kshitigarbha; at the ears, from *dzim*, Vajrapani; at the nose, from *kham*, Khagarbha; at the mouth, from *gam*, Lokeshvara; at the head, from *ksham*, Sarvanivaranavishkambhin; and below the heart (i.e., the navel), from *sam*, Samantabhadra (Kamalarakrita's *Sadhana of the Black Yamari*, Toh. 1932, vol. Mi, f. 53a3-4).

In this consecration, the head (or, in some cases, the forehead) represents the sense faculty of touch, and the navel region, that of mental phenomena. Kongtrul states that at the forehead, from *ksham* appears Vajra Body, green; and above the navel, from *sam*, Vajra Mind, red (Kongtrul's *Five-Deities Sadhana of Lord Red Yamari: The Pristine-Awareness Cudgel That Obliterates Obstructing Forces*, f. 7b3). This consecration of the senses is identical to that found in the Guhyasamaja system.

Shridhara explains that the purpose of the consecration of the sense fields is to attain the six types of clairvoyance, namely, the divine eye (*lha'i mig*), the divine ear (*lha'i rna*), knowing others' minds (*gzhan gyi sems shes pa*), recollection of previous lives (*sngon gyi gnas rjes su dran pa*), knowing how to perform miraculous feats (*rdzu 'phrul gyi cho 'phrul*), and knowing how defilements are exhausted (*zag pa zad pa'i shes pa*) (Shridhara's *Sadhana of the Black Yamari*, Toh. 1923, vol. Mi, f. 5a6-b2; and Shridhara's *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Black Yamari Tantra*, Toh. 1918, vol. Bi, f. 119a5-6). For the details of the syllables and deities of this consecration, see Ratnakarashantipa's *Jewel Lamp Commentary on Difficult Points of the Glorious Black Yamari Tantra* (Toh. 1919), vol. Bi, f. 146a1.

For the consecration of the deities' heads, throats, and hearts as the bodies, voices, and minds of all buddhas, one imagines that at the heart an awakened-mind Yamari arises from a vajra marked by *hum*; at the throat, an awakened-speech Yamari, from a lotus marked by *ah*; and at the head, an awakened-body Yamari, from a wheel marked by *om*. Then, offerings are made to all the buddhas of the universe. While uttering three mantras (*om sarva tathāgata citta vajra svabhāvātmake 'haṃ; om sarva tathāgata*

vāk vajra svabhāvātmake 'ham; om sarva tathāgata kāya vajra svabhāvātmake 'ham), one imagines the deities become the natures of the bodies, voices, and minds of all buddhas.

To receive initiation, one meditates that light radiating from the syllable at one's heart invites all the buddhas and bodhisattvas to gather in the space in front. These emanate goddesses who, holding vases and uttering auspicious words, initiate oneself and the other deities of the mandala. One is thereby crowned by Vajrasattva. All other deities are crowned by Yamari.

Shridhara explains the drawing in of the pristine-awareness deities in the following way: Light radiating from one's heart invites the pristine-awareness deities to gather in space. Offerings of drinking water and other outer articles are made to them. By uttering one mantra, these deities are summoned; by uttering a second, they are made to enter one's body; by uttering a third, they are bound inside oneself; and by uttering a fourth, they are dominated.

For the rite of offering and praise, one invites all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. From one's heart are emanated goddesses holding flowers and other articles, dancing in various ways and singing charming songs, making offerings to the buddhas and bodhisattvas, and uttering verses of praise (a summary of Shridhara's *Sadhana of the Black Yamari*, Toh. 1923, vol. Mi, ff. 6a7-b5).

The tasting of nectar (*bdud rtsi myong ba*) is explained in the third chapter of the *Black Yamari Tantra*. There are five nectars (*bdud rtsi lnga*), namely, urine (*dri chu*), feces (*dri chen*), blood (*rak ta*), semen (*byang sems dkar po*), and marrow (*rkang mar*); and five kinds of flesh (*sha lnga*): human (*mi*), ox (*ba glang*), dog (*khyi*), horse (*rta*), and elephant (*glang po che*). These, each marked by its respective syllable, are imagined to be all contained in a skull cup (*kapala*) set on three skulls. Below the skull cup arise wind and fire from their respective syllables. Above the skull cup manifests a moon, and above the moon, a white club marked by a vajra. Fanned by the wind, the fire blazes, causing the substances in the skull cup to melt. The club stirs the substances three times. Then, the moon, club, and vajra dissolve into light and merge with the substances, becoming a nectar, like mercury in appearance. In conjunction with mantras and symbolic hand gestures, one imagines that pristine-awareness nectar from the minds of all buddhas is drawn in and made to merge with the nectar. The skull cup of nectar becomes infinite in size. After consecrating the nectar in this way, one offers it to oneself, the lord of the mandala. Imagining that one's tongue is a white hollow vajra, one uses it to draw in the nectar, which is then offered to all buddhas within oneself. Then, light radiating from one's heart dispels all thoughts, and one enters the ultimate meaning of reality. See Ratnakarashantipa's *Jewel Lamp Commentary on Difficult Points of the Glorious Black Yamari Tantra* (Toh. 1919), vol. Bi, ff. 147b4-148a3; and Kongtrul's *Five-Deities Sadhana of Lord Red Yamari: The Pristine-Awareness Cudgel That Obliterates Obstructing Forces*, f. 2a3-b4.

After the above steps is the recitation of mantra. Then, when one wishes to dispense with recitation, one makes offerings to the pristine-awareness deities in front and asks them to leave, while the pledge deities dissolve into the seed-syllable at one's heart. See Ratnakarashantipa's *Sadhana of the Black Yamari: Blossoming of the Kumuda Flower* (Toh. 1935), vol. Mi, ff. 61b1-62a2.

94 *Circle of the Sun* (Toh. 397), vol. Ga, f. 228b6-7. The Rali tantras belong to the Sam-

vara class. They include the texts from Toh. 383 to Toh. 414 of the Dergé Kangyur. Some scholars exclude the *Mahabalajñanarāja* (*Mahābalajñānarāja*; sTobs chen ye shes rgyal po) (Toh. 410) and in its place list the *Ri gi Arali Tantra* (Ri gi a ra li, Toh. 427) (Butön's *General Presentation of the Sets of Tantra*, f. 215a3).

- 95 The notes on the preceding section should suffice to give an idea of what is meant by the steps of the phase of creation delineated by the “four dwellings” (*gnas pa bzhi*) taught in the Rali tantras.
- 96 Drokmi (’Brog mi), or Drokmi Sakya Yeshé the Translator (Sakya ye shes lo tsa ba) (993–1050), taught the Hevajra tantra system to Könchok Gyalpo of the Khön family, who founded the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism. This school takes its name from the Sakya monastery that Könchok Gyalpo established in 1073 at Sakya in southwestern Tibet.
- 97 Maitripa is known by various names such as Advayavajra (gNyis med rdo rje), Avadhutipa, Maitrinatha, and Maitrigupta. He was born in the early ninth century and lived to the age of seventy-eight. He was a Brahmin scholar and became a Buddhist after meeting Naropa, who was evidently his first master. Having become a monk at Vikramashila Monastery, he studied with Shantipa and others. He was evicted from the monastery by Atisha, who had seen him drinking beer in the company of a woman. Later he became a student of the great adept Shavari. Maitripa is particularly linked to the transmission of the great seal (*mahāmudrā*). His famous students include Sahajavajra, Shunyatasamadhi, Ramapala, and Vajrapani. His Tibetan students were Khyungpo Naljor and Marpa. For details of his life, see Taranatha's *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*.

The reference here is to Maitripa's *Esoteric Instructions on the Four Seals* (Toh. 2295, vol. Zhi), as well as to the *Definite Explanation of the Initiation* (Toh. 2252, vol. Wi), texts whose contents are closely connected to, if not actual commentaries on, Nagarjunagarbha's *Ascertainment of the Four Seals* (Toh. 2225, vol. Wi). In his *Esoteric Instructions on the Four Seals*, Maitripa distinguishes different phases of the tantric path: the outer phase of creation (*phyi bskyed pa'i rim pa*); the profound phase of creation (*zab mo bskyed pa'i rim pa*); the phase of completion (*rdzogs rim*); the phase of perfect completion (*yongs su rdzogs pa'i rim pa*); and the phase of the essential nature (*ngo bo nyid kyi rim pa*). He correlates the four seals, each of which represents a set of four joys, with these phases: the action seal (*las kyi phyag rgya, karmamudrā*) with the profound phase of creation and the phase of completion; the seal of the doctrine (*chos kyi phyag rgya, dharmamudrā*) with the phase of perfect completion; the great seal (*phyag rgya chen po, mahāmudrā*) with the phase of the essential nature; and the pledge seal (*dam tshig gi phyag rgya, samayamudrā*) with the outer phase of creation. The outer phase of creation consists in the circle of deities. The male figure of such a circle symbolizes method; the female, wisdom; and their embrace, nonduality. One therefore speaks of “pledge.”

In regard to the phases mentioned above, Ramapala uses the expressions “brief phase,” or “outer phase of creation,” and “inner phase of creation,” and states that the second means vajra recitation (*rdo rje bzlas pa, vajrajāpa*). He explains that the phase of completion, phase of perfect completion, and phase of the essential nature are equivalent to self-consecration (*bdag byin gyis brlabs pa, svadhiṣṭhāna*), actual awak-

ening (*mngon par byang chub pa*, *abbisambodhi*), and union (*zung jug, yuganaddha*), respectively. These last three are similar to the last three of Nagarjuna's five stages of the completion phase, namely, illusory body, luminous clarity, and the union of these two (Ramapala's *Elucidating Difficult Points of the Definitive Explanation of the Initiation*, Toh. 2253, vol. Wi, f. 159b3-4).

Kongtrul explains that by "outer phase of creation" Maitripa means simply the clear appearance of the deity generated through creation-phase meditation that relies on imagination, while the "profound phase of creation" refers to the yogas with the action seal and pristine-awareness seal and to the vajra recitation (Kongtrul's *Manual for the Performance of Retreat*, ff. 4b7-5a2).

Moreover, Ramapala explains that for the pledge seal, the arising of the male and female figures together is the joy; the jewel city, the supreme joy; the dwelling of the deities in the midst of solar and lunar essences (symbolizing method and wisdom), melted by passion, is the innate joy; and the arising of the deities in forms of the enjoyment dimension of awakening after having been urged with songs by the goddess Pukasi and the others (of the Hevajra mandala), the joy of separation (from attachment) (a summary of Ramapala's *Elucidating Difficult Points*, ff. 157b5-158a5). This accords with Maitripa's system in which the innate joy is taken to be the third joy, and the joy of separation, the fourth joy.

- 98 The *Indestructible Tent* (Toh. 419), vol. Nga, f. 44b1-2. This tantra belongs to the Hevajra class of tantras. The Dergé Kangyur reads: *sangs rgyas gnas ni rab rdzogs dang/ rnam pa lnga po bsgom pa dang/ kun tu bzang po'i rang bzhin dang/ rang gi lhag pa'i lhar sgrub dang/ dkyil 'khor rnam gyi dgod pa dang/ mchod bstod bdud rtsi la sogs pa/ rim pa rjes su bsgom par bya/ rnal 'byor yan lag drug tu 'dod*. That differs in several ways from the citation as found in *IOK*.

Yet another version of this citation is found in Indrabhuti's *Commentary on the Indestructible Tent Tantra* (Toh. 1194), vol. Ca, f. 48a1-2: *sangs rgyas gnas gzhi rnam rdzogs par/ rnam pa lnga po bsgom byas la/ kun tu bzang po las byung ba'i/ rang lhag lha yi sgrub pa'i thabs/ dkyil 'khor de bzhin dgod par bya/ mchod bstod bdud rtsi myang la sogs/ rim pa yis ni bsgom bya ste/ yan lag drug tu sbyor bar bya*.

- 99 Durjayachandra (Mi thub zla ba) was one of the twelve tantric teachers of great renown at Vikramashila Monastery. His teachers were Dombiheruka and Dombiyogini, wife of Dombiheruka. Durjayachandra had entreated them to teach him, and after receiving their instructions, encountered Heruka in a vision and attained an extraordinary level of realization. See Taranatha's *History of Buddhism in India* (English translation), pp.18, 327; and Taranatha's *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*. Tibetans had several names for him, such as Jangka Dawa (sByangs dka' zla ba), Tupka Dawa (Thub dka' zla ba), and Gyalka Dawa (rGyal dka' zla ba).

The reference here is to Durjayachandra's *Commentary on Difficult Points [of the Hevajra Tantra]* (Toh. 1185), vol. Ga, ff. 1-58. "Others" in the text refers to other authors of various commentaries on the Hevajra Tantra found in the Tengyur.

- 100 The terms "nature" (*kham*s) and "family" (*rigs*), normally used to refer to buddha nature (*tathāgatagarbha*), the essence of enlightenment, are used here to denote both the unenlightened families and the enlightened families. "Unenlightened families" refers to the aggregates and other psychophysical constituents of a person when the

constituents have not yet been recognized as the five enlightened families, that of Vairochana, and so forth. Once recognized, they become the families of enlightenment, the result.

Ultimately, all families are simply the single state of innate joy (*lhan cig skyes pa'i dga' ba*). However, in order to fulfill the aims of countless types of trainees, that innate joy, considered in terms of five elements (earth for Vairochana, water for Akshobhya, fire for Amitabha, wind for Amoghasiddhi, and space for Ratnasambhava), is differentiated into five states of mind or five emotional afflictions, desire, and so forth. Hence, innate joy becomes the five families, that of Vairochana, and so forth. On this point, see Kongtrul's discussion in his *Commentary on the Hevajra*, ff. 204b3-205b6.

Due to the strength of a particular emotional affliction, a person by nature belongs to one of five families. If aversion is the strongest of the five emotions, he or she belongs to the vajra family; if delusion, to the transcendent family; if desire, to the lotus family; if jealousy, to the action family; and if pride, to the jewel family. Each of these families is represented by one of the five buddhas: Akshobhya, whose insignia is the vajra-cross, represents the vajra family; Vairochana, whose insignia is the wheel, the transcendent family; Amitabha, whose insignia is the lotus, the lotus family; Amoghasiddhi, whose insignia is the sword, the action family; and Ratnasambhava, whose insignia is the jewel, the jewel family.

Just below, the text speaks of six families. The Vajrasattva family, which encompasses all five families together, is considered to be the sixth.

- 101 On the six practices (*chos drug*), or six branches (*yan lag drug*), see above, Chapter 1, n. 17.

- 102 Here, “world system” (*'jig rten gyi khams*) refers to a universe comprised of Mount Meru, the four continents, and eight subcontinents, as posited in the ancient Indo-Tibetan cosmology. See Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Myriad Worlds* (English translation), pp. 109-111.

In the Hevajra creation phase, the creation of the celestial palace and its world system entails the visualization of a tetrahedron, within which arise the configurations of the four elements (wind, fire, water, and earth) from their respective syllables (*yam*, *ram*, *vam*, and *lam*). Above them, from a syllable *bhrum* arises a wheel, and from that, Vairochana. From the merging of these elements (which symbolize the world system) manifests the celestial palace. Within that palace, through the sequence of the five awakenings (moon, sun, the two syllables *am hum*, their transformation into vajra and curved knife, the merging of all of them, and the arising of the forms of the deities), one manifests as Hevajra and his consort Nairatmya (a summary of Durjayachandra's *Sadhana called Six Branches*, Toh. 1239, vol. Nya, f. 127a2-b2). For the symbolism of these steps, see Devavrata's *Sadhana of the Dakini Indestructible Tent*, Toh. 1322, vol. Ta, f. 256a4-b1.

- 103 The nature of water is aversion. The purified aspect of aversion is the essence of Akshobhya. See *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations*, f. 34a1-2 (Dharma Chakra edition, Rumtek).
- 104 In this explanation, the six branches are not presented in the order in which they are meditated upon. The actual order of practice is as follows: creation of the mandala

and resident deities; passion and emanation of the deities of the retinue; initiation; tasting of nectar; offering; and praise. See Durjayachandra's *Commentary on Difficult Points [of the Hevajra Tantra]* (Toh. 1185), vol. Ga, f. 47a6-7; and Durjayachandra's *Sadhana called Six Branches* (Toh. 1239), vol. Nya, ff. 122-130.

- 105 Although the Tengyur contains only a few works of liturgy composed by Jalandhara, he seems to have been an exceptional master and a main link in the instruction lineages of the practices with a consort and the practice of luminous clarity (*'od gsal*). He first became a disciple of Lvabapa who advised him to go to Oddiyana to seek the guidance of the "middle" Indrabhuti (there were three), this one a student of Saroruha. There, he was also instructed by Lakshminkara and Kachapada. Soon after, he had a vision of the mandala of Heruka, and after being initiated by many dakinis, attained the highest realization. Subsequent to that, he performed extraordinary activities in order to awaken others. His main disciple was undoubtedly the learned and accomplished Krishnacharya. See Taranatha's *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*.
- 106 The terms defining this eightfold sequence (*skabs brgyad*) are borrowed from the non-tantric parts of Maitreya's *Ornament of Clear Realization* (Toh. 3786), which highlights the hidden meaning of the transcendent wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) discourses. These are called "eight themes" (*dnogs po brgyad, asta padārtha*), presented in this order: knowledge of all aspects (*rnam mkhyen, sarvajñāna*), knowledge of the paths (*lam shes, mārgajñāna*), knowledge of the bases (*gzhi shes, vastujñāna*), the yoga of the manifestation of all aspects in their entirety (*rnam kun mngon rdzogs kyi sbyor ba, sarvākārabhisambodha*), the peak yoga (*rtse mo'i sbyor ba, mūrdhaprayoga*), the sequential yoga (*mthar gyis sbyor ba, anupurvaprayoga*), the instantaneous yoga (*skad cig ma'i sbyor ba, kṣāṇikaprayoga*), and the resultant dimension of reality (*'bras bu chos sku, phalamdharmakāya*). The first three are "objects" to be known; the next four, the yogas to apply; and the last, the result to be attained.

The first, knowledge of all aspects (see next paragraph concerning the meaning of "aspects"), is the direct realization that all aspects are primordially devoid of inherent existence. The second, knowledge of the paths, is the realization present in the mind of an exalted bodhisattva who has awakened in himself or herself the paths of the proclaimers, solitary realizers, and bodhisattvas. The third, knowledge of the bases, is the realization that abides neither in perfect peace nor in cyclic existence and that is in contrast to adherence to knowables and the path and result as inherently existent. The fourth, the yoga of the manifestation of all aspects in their entirety, is the contemplation of the three knowledges (the first three themes) as lacking inherent existence cultivated on the path of preparation with the aim of gaining mastery of them. The fifth, the peak yoga, is the contemplation in which one becomes perfectly familiarized with the three knowledges as lacking any inherent existence cultivated on the path of preparation with the aim of attaining the reality dimension of awakening. The sixth, the sequential yoga, is the contemplation in which one becomes perfectly familiarized with the three knowledges as lacking inherent existence carried out with the immediate aim of attaining the instantaneous yoga and the ultimate aim of attaining the reality dimension of awakening. The seventh, the instantaneous yoga, is the contemplation in which one becomes perfectly familiarized with the three knowledges as lacking inherent existence, carried out on the last moment before awakening with

the aim of attaining the reality dimension of awakening. The eighth, the yoga of the resultant dimension of reality, is the result of the four yogas that have as their objects the three knowledges (the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh yogas).

Each of these themes has a number of elucidating topics, for a total of seventy topics, such as the resolve to awaken, the teaching of the universal way, etc., which constitute the knowledge of all aspects. This set of seventy is what is meant by “all aspects” in the first theme, the knowledge of all aspects. See Mikyö Dorjé’s *Commentary on Maitreya’s Ornament of Clear Realizations*, ff. 37b6-39b1.

The text in which Jalandhara presents this framework is the *Vajra Lamp: A Brief and Correct Explanation of the Hevajra Sadhana* (Toh. 1237, vol. Nya, ff. 73-96). This text is an extraordinary explanation of the *Sadhana of the Glorious Hevajra* (Toh. 1218, vol. Nya, ff. 1-7) composed by Saroruhā (Saroruhavajra), also known as Padmavajra. Jalandhara uses this terminology to refer to various steps in the phase of creation. Each of these steps he calls an “awakening” (*byang chub pa*). The order of the first and third is the reverse of the order in *IOK*, that is to say, the first in *Vajra Lamp* is knowledge of all aspects; the second, knowledge of the paths; and the third, knowledge of the bases.

The eight consecutive awakenings according to Jalandhara are delineated as follows: The first includes the steps beginning with the meditation on emptiness, generation of the disks of the elements, up to the manifestation of the celestial palace. These steps constitute the awakening by means of knowledge of all aspects (*thams cad mkhyen pa nyid mngon par byang chub pa*) (*Vajra Lamp*, f. 81a6). The second, comprising the steps from the creation of the multicolored lotus in the center of the mandala, which is the seat of the main deity, up to the full manifestation of the causal Vajradhara and of the deities of the retinue, is the awakening by means of knowledge of the paths (*lam shes pa nyid mngon par byang chub pa*). The third, comprising the steps of contemplation beginning with the entrance of the mind of the intermediate being into Hevajra up to the emanation of the deities created in the wombs of Hevajra’s consorts, is the awakening by means of knowledge of all aspects (*rnam pa thams cad shes pa nyid mngon par byang chub pa*), i.e., knowledge of the bases (*gzhi shes*) (*ibid.*, f. 88a6). The fourth, the invitation of the pristine-awareness deities and the total merging of these into the pledge deities, is the awakening by means of the manifestation of all aspects in their entirety (*rnam pa kun mngon rdzogs mngon par byang chub pa*). The fifth, the steps of initiation, sealing with the lord of the family, and receiving offerings and praise from the goddesses, is the awakening of the peak yoga (*rtse mo’i mngon par byang chub pa*) (*ibid.*, f. 89a6-7). The sixth, the step of tasting the nectar, is the awakening by means of realization of the sequential yoga (*mthar gyis gnas pa’i mngon rtogs*) (*ibid.*, f. 89b4). The seventh, the spontaneous arising as a white Hevajra with one face and two arms, performed after the step of effecting the benefit of sentient beings, is the awakening by means of the instantaneous yoga (*skad cig ma gcig la mngon par byang chub pa*) (*ibid.*, f. 90a7). The eighth, entering the state of luminous clarity subsequent to the spontaneous arising, is the awakening by means of the dimension of reality (*chos kyi sku mngon par byang chub pa*) (*ibid.*, f. 91b1).

The steps of contemplation in these sequential awakenings are outlined below in this chapter in the section entitled “An Alternative Framework.” See below, Chapter 3, n. 116, for clarification on why Jalandhara uses these terms for the contemplative steps of the creation phase.

- 107 Omniscient Lord of Dharma (Chos rje kun mkhyen) is the title of Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen (Shes rab rgyal mtshan) (1292-1361), a renowned master of the Jonang school, who originally belonged to the Sakya school. At the age of thirty-one, he traveled to Jonang where he received Kalachakra initiation and teaching from Ketsun Yönten Gyatso (mKhas btsun yon tan rgya mtsho) and from that time was considered a Jonangpa. He wrote numerous works and thereby propagated the tenets of that school. He had two of his main disciples, Mati Panchen, also known as Sazang (Sa bzang), and Lotsawa Lodrö Pal (Lo tsa ba blo gros dpal), revise the Tibetan translation of the *Kalachakra Tantra* and Pundarika's *Stainless Light*. When he was thirty-five, he became the abbot of Jonang.
- 108 See above, Chapter 3, n. 77.
- 109 For the yoga of the vital essence and subtle yoga, see above, Chapter 3, n. 82.
- 110 Tsami Lotsawa Sangyé Trak (Tsa mi lo tsa ba sangs rgyas grags) was a disciple of the Indian Kalachakrapada and contemporary of Abhayakaragupta who, like himself, was a disciple of Bodhibhadra. He taught Abhayakara the *Stainless Light*. He is credited with a translation of Pundarika's *Stainless Light* into Tibetan. (See *The Blue Annals*, trans. Roerich, pp. 761, 795-6, 837.) He is the only Tibetan to have served as abbot of Nalanda.
- 111 Gyalwa Rangjung Dorjé (rGyal ba rang 'byung rdo rje), the Third Karmapa (1284-1339), is an important reference figure in Kongtrül's works. The Karma Kagyu school's style of approach to the tantras can undoubtedly be traced to him. He received the Tsami transmission of the Kalachakra, as well as other transmissions, from Nyedo Kunga Döndrup (sNye mdo kun dga' don grub). His works on Kalachakra, the transmissions of which are unbroken to the present time, include *Compendium of Astronomical and Astrological Calculation* on the World chapter of the root tantra; *Profound Inner Reality* on the Inner chapter; the *Initiation and Sadhana* on the Initiation and Accomplishment chapters; and *Illumination of the Essence of the Three Yogas* on the Wisdom chapter.
- 112 Twelve aspects of the meaning of the truth (*bden don rnam pa bcu gnyis*): the purities or states free from the obscurations of the twelve links of dependent origination taught in the discourses of the Buddha, namely, ignorance (*ma rig pa*, *avidyā*), mental formations (*'du byed*, *saṃskāra*), consciousness (*rnam shes*, *vijñāna*), name and form (*ming gzugs*, *nāmarūpa*), six sense fields (*skye mched drug*, *ṣaḍāyatana*), contact (*reg pa*, *sparsā*), feeling (*tsbor ba*, *vedanā*), craving (*sred pa*, *tṛṣṇā*), appropriation (*len pa*, *upādāna*), becoming (*srid pa*, *bhava*), birth (*skye pa*, *jāti*), old age and death (*rga shi*, *jarāmarāṇam*). See Pundarika's *Stainless Light* (vol. Tha), f. 122b5-6.
- 113 The identity of Rahulaguhyā (sGra gcan gsang ba) is not clear. The name Rahula is mentioned in Taranatha's works on history but none with *guhya* (*gsang ba*) appended. His work on the Hevajra (see next note) may indicate that he is the same person as Rahulavajra, a student of Durjayachandra, who, together with Jalandhara, appears in the lineage of instructions on inner fire (*gtum mo*) in Taranatha's *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*. He is possibly the same person as Rahula (Rahuladhara) (sGra gcan 'dzin), author of works on the Hevajra such as *Sadhana of the Single Hero* (*dPa' gcig ma'i sgrub thabs*) (Toh. 1310).

- 114 This presentation of the contemplative steps in the phase of creation is found in Jalandhara's *Vajra Lamp: A Brief and Correct Explanation of the Hevajra Sadhana* (Toh. 1237), vol. Nya, ff. 73-96; and Rahulaguhyā's *Sadhana of Hevajra called Luminous* (Toh. 1238), vol. Nya, ff. 96-126. Rahulaguhyā clarifies and expands on some parts of Jalandhara's *Hevajra Sadhana*.
- 115 The thirty-two major marks of a great being (*skyes bu chen po'i mtshan sum cu rtsa gnyis*) are signs that characterize the physical body of a buddha. See Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Myriad Worlds* (English translation), p. 270, n. 60.
- 116 The thirty-two steps are described as follows:
- (1) Circle of offerings (*mchod pa'i 'khor lo*): One meditates that light radiating from the syllable *hum* on a sun disk at one's heart invites the mandala of Hevajra, the gurus, the buddhas, and the bodhisattvas. One performs the outer, inner, and secret offering rites, and the offering of essential reality itself. For the outer offering, one visualizes sixteen goddesses carrying various articles. For the inner offering, one imagines that Chauri and the other deities of the mandala present secret pledge substances (*dam tshig gi rdzas*). The secret offering is that of the bliss arising from union (Rahulaguhyā's *Sadhana of Hevajra called Luminous*, Toh. 1238, vol. Nya, f. 97a1). One imagines that from the state of bliss, deities are emanated and withdrawn. One concludes with apology for one's mistakes and failings, rejoicing in virtue, dedication, taking refuge, and forming the awakening mind that is the union of emptiness and compassion (a summary of Jalandhara's *Vajra Lamp: A Brief and Correct Explanation of the Hevajra Sadhana*, Toh. 1237, vol. Nya, f. 74a4-7; Rahulaguhyā's *Sadhana of Hevajra called Luminous*, Toh. 1238, vol. Nya, ff. 96b4-97b3).
 - (2) The four divine states (*tshangs gnas bzhi*): For this step, one contemplates the qualities of great love (*byams pa chen po*), great compassion (*snying rje chen po*), joy (*dga' ba*), and equanimity (*btang snyoms*) (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 74a7-b3; Rahulaguhyā, f. 76b3-6). These contemplations are known as *brahmaṇihas*, literally, "the abodes of Brahma," because the development of these qualities without understanding of the illusory nature of things can cause one to be reborn in one of Brahma's realms.
 - (3) The supreme (*mchog*): Immediately after the contemplations of the four divine states, one imagines that one's ordinary body has vanished and meditates on the meaning of four syllables, *shri he ru ka*. This is the contemplative step known as "the supreme" (a summary of Jalandhara, ff. 74b3-75a1; Rahulaguhyā, ff. 97b6-98a2). Kongtrul writes that, in terms of literal meaning, *shri* denotes that which is wished for, or strived for: nondual pristine awareness, the state of the ultimate vehicle, the domain of familiarization. *He* means cause (*betu*), where "cause" signifies emptiness, in that no phenomenon is born from itself, from another cause, from both itself and another, or from no cause. *Ru* means form (*rūpa*), where "form" signifies absence of any abiding or perishable collection. *Ka* means not abiding (*kacita thista*) in either of the two extremes of permanence or annihilation. See *Commentary on the Hevajra*, f. 117b1-6.
 - (4) The innate (*lhan cig skyes pa*): One meditates that one's impure body vanishes into the state of emptiness. Then, in the center of a celestial palace, from the syllable *vam*, one instantly manifests as white Vajrasattva, peaceful in expression,

sitting crossed-legged, with one face and two arms: this is the innate Heruka (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 74b4-6; Rahulaguhyā, f. 98a3-b7). Here, “the innate” (*lhan cig skyes pa*) refers to the simple form of the deity, appearing without consort.

- (5) One’s favored deity (*’dod pa’i lha*): One visualizes at one’s heart the two syllables that transform into a sun disk marked with a syllable *hum*. The syllable transforms into a black vajra with the same syllable in its center. The vajra transforms into the terrifying form of Hevajra with eight faces, one’s favored deity, in the aspect of Embodiment of Aversion or Vajra Aversion (*Zhe sdang rdo rje*). This step is called the contemplation of “one’s favored deity” (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 75a3-b1; Rahulaguhyā, f. 99a3-b1).
- (6) The circle of protection (*srung ’khor*): With Vajra Aversion visualized in one’s heart, one imagines that from the syllable at the heart of Vajra Aversion, ten wrathful deities (*khro bo bcu*) are emanated into the cardinal and intermediate directions. One orders them to perform the appeasing form of activity, as well as other forms. As a result, replicas of the ten wrathful deities emanate forth to draw in the obstructive forces and hand them over to the ten wrathful deities, who overpower them.

Then, one visualizes in front of oneself the two syllables that transform into a sun disk marked with a syllable. This syllable transforms into a vajra-cross, which transforms into the vajra ground, fence, and tent, which prevent entry by obstructive forces. These steps of contemplation comprise “the circle of protection” (a summary of Jalandhara, ff. 75a3-76b3; Rahulaguhyā, ff. 99b1-100b4).

- (7) Emancipation (*nam thar*): One recites the mantra that represents the very essence of all phenomena (*om śūnyatā jñāna vajra svabhāvatmakō ’ham*) and meditates on the emptiness nature of oneself and the universe. This is the step of meditation on the total protection of emptiness called “being directed toward (or intent on) emptiness” (*stong nyid la lbag par mos pa*), or, in Kongtrul’s words, “emancipation,” in the sense of emptiness being the “gateway to emancipation” (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 76b5-7; Rahulaguhyā, f. 100b6).
- (8) The charnel grounds (*dur khrod*): One imagines that outside the celestial palace, situated in the cardinal and intermediate directions, are the eight charnel grounds: in the east, Violently Hostile (*gTum drag*); in the south, Terrifying Skulls (*’Jigs byed thod pa can*); in the west, Blazing Fiercely (*’Bar ba ’khrug pa*); in the north, Wild Thicket (*’Tshang tshing ’khrigs pa*); in the northeast, Exquisite Grove (*Phun tshogs nags tshal*); in the southwest, Fearsome Darkness (*Mun pa mi zad pa*); in the southeast, Laughing *Ha Ha* (*Ha ha dgod pa*); and in the northwest, Sounding *Kili Kili* (*Ki li ki li sgra sgrogs pa*). Each charnel ground is characterized by different sets of elements, such as the tree, *yaksha*, guardian, *naga*, cloud, mountain, stupa, etc. This is the contemplative step called “the charnel grounds” (a summary of Jalandhara, ff. 77a1-78b2; Rahulaguhyā, ff. 102a2-b3).
- (9) The multi-storied celestial palace (*khang brtsegs*): One imagines that in the expanse of emptiness is a white tetrahedron, within which arise, in sequence, the tiered configurations of the four elements, beginning with wind. These elements merge as one and manifest as a multi-storied celestial palace, the various parts of which symbolize the thirty-seven factors for awakening. These steps comprise

the visualization called “the celestial palace” (a summary of Jalandhara, ff. 76b7-77a1, 78b2-81a7; Rahulaguhyā, ff. 100b7-101a3, 102b4-103a5).

- (10) The causal mandala (*rgyu'i dkyil 'khor*): One imagines that in the center of the celestial palace is a lotus. On the cardinal petals, beginning in the east, are the four Hindu gods, Brahma, Vishnu, Ishvara, and Indra or Rudra (here, these gods symbolize the four demons: the aggregates, the lord of death, emotional afflictions, and self-complacency, respectively); on the intermediate directions, beginning in the northeast, Yama, Kubera, Rakshasa, and Vemachitri. (Rahulaguhyā places the visualization described in this paragraph with the previous step, while Jalandhara places it here.)

Above the lotus and gods is a sun disk. Above that, from two sets of the sixteen vowels, arises a moon disk. The moon is mirror-like pristine awareness, which manifests the thirty-two major signs of a great being. Above the moon, from two sets of consonants arises a sun. The sun is the pristine awareness of sameness, which manifests the eighty minor marks of a great being. Above that, one visualizes two syllables that transform into a skull cup and a curved knife marked by the same syllables. This is discerning pristine awareness. Light radiates from the syllable on the curved knife, transforming countless realms into light and then drawing that light back into the syllable on the curved knife. At this point, all the elements (i.e., moon, sun, and insignia) merge into one. This is the all-accomplishing pristine awareness. As a result of that merging, one manifests in the form of Hevajra. This is the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena. In that way, the causal vajra-holder arises through the sequence of the five awakenings.

Following that, one visualizes four syllables on the moon disks above the petals in the four main directions of the lotus, beginning in the east. Each syllable stands between sun and moon disks. Another four syllables, also between sun and moon disks, are in the intermediate directions. Those eight syllables transform into insignia. The insignia transform into Chauri and the other deities of the retinue. Then, one visualizes the fifteen offering goddesses standing outside the walls of the celestial palace. These steps of visualization constitute “the causal mandala” (a summary of Jalandhara, ff. 81a7-85b4; Rahulaguhyā, ff. 103b2-104a2). These steps are equivalent to the creation of the causal vajra-holder.

- (11) The descent of seminal fluid (*khu ba lung ba*): One imagines that light emanates from the syllable at one's heart and summons the intermediate-state being, whose nature is great bliss, surrounded by two strings of red syllables *ho*. The being then enters oneself. As a result of that, and due to the passion, oneself and one's consort become the flavor of supreme bliss and melt into seminal fluid (a summary of Jalandhara, ff. 85b4-6; Rahulaguhyā, ff. 104a2-4).
- (12) The manifestation (*bzhegs pa*): At this point, four deities of the retinue, beginning with Pukhāsi, feeling helpless without their lord, request with songs that the main deities manifest again. Thereupon, as though awakening from sleep, the two main deities appear as the resultant vajra-holders. This is brought about through the sequence of five awakenings: The bodhichitta fluid, or vital essence, transforms into the vowels and consonants, from which manifest a moon, symbol of mirror-like pristine awareness, and a sun, symbol of the pristine awareness of sameness. The seed-syllable of Hevajra that stands between moon and

sun transforms into the insignia. This is the pristine awareness of discernment. The merging of moon, sun, and insignia into one is the all-accomplishing pristine awareness. From this merging issues the light of the five pristine awarenesses. That light absorbs the animate and inanimate universe and takes the form of a moon disk of bodhichitta. After that, in an instant, one arises as the form of Hevajra. The full manifestation of the deity is the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena. This step is called “the manifestation” (a summary of Jalandhara, ff. 85b6-87a3; Rahulaguhyā, f. 104a4-5).

- (13) The placement (*dgod pa*): In order to purify the psychophysical constituents, one imagines that forms are syllable *om*; feelings, *im*; recognitions, long *im*; mental formations, *um*; and consciousnesses, *am*. Similarly, flesh is visualized as *um*; blood, *rim*; semen, long *rim*; and bone, marrow, and fat, *lim*. Visual forms are visualized as long *lim*; sounds, *em*; odors, *em*; tastes, *om*; tangibles, *om*; and mental activity, *am*. These syllables symbolize the deities of the mandala.

One then visualizes a lotus at each of four places—the navel, heart, throat, and forehead—with sixty-four, eight, sixteen, and thirty-two petals, respectively, upon which are the syllables *am*, *hum*, *om*, and *ham*. This is done in order to consecrate one’s body, speech, and mind. Then, one visualizes a white *om* at the head, from which light emanates and returns with an infinity of vajra bodies while one utters the related mantra. One visualizes a red *ah* at the throat, from which light emanates and returns with an infinity of vajra voices while one utters the related mantra. One visualizes a black *hum* at the heart, from which light emanates and returns with an infinity of vajra minds while one utters the related mantra. This is called the contemplation of great yoga. These steps of contemplation comprise what is called “the placement” (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 87a3-b2; Rahulaguhyā, ff. 105a7-106a2).

- (14) The embodiment of aversion (*zhe sdang gi bdag nyid can*): For this, one visualizes oneself as Hevajra in union with the consort, black in color and terrifying, the embodiment of aversion. This form is the pledge-being. At the heart of the pledge-being upon a sun disk is imagined the pristine-awareness being, which resembles the pledge-being. At the heart of the pristine-awareness being is imagined the syllable *hum*, the contemplation-being. These are the steps called “the embodiment of aversion” (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 87b3-6; Rahulaguhyā, f. 106a3-6).
- (15) The emission (*’byin pa*): One imagines the placement of syllables on the consort of the pledge-being in order to purify the aggregates, and so forth, as was done for the male. In addition, her secret place and that of the male deity are consecrated by means of visualization and the recitation of the specified mantras. From the union of Hevajra and his consort, bodhichitta is emitted in the form of the specified syllable. Viewing it as being of the nature of the transcendent ones (the buddhas) and yoginis, one offers it to oneself. Then, the drops of bodhichitta in the womb of the consort transform into syllables. In the order in which the deities of the mandala were created previously, these syllables transform into Chauri and the others, and the last into the two main deities of the retinue. The deities are emitted to perform the welfare of beings and then drawn back and absorbed into the deities of the outer mandala. These steps of contemplation are called “the emission” or “the emergence” (*’byung ba*) of the

- deities of the mandala (a summary of Jalandhara, ff. 87b6-88a7; Rahulaguhya, ff. 106a7-110a2).
- (16) The pristine-awareness mandala (*ye shes 'khor lo*): At this point, brilliant light radiating from the deities of the mandala fills all space. Then, to draw in the pristine-awareness deities from space, one visualizes at one's heart a skull cup that arises from a syllable standing on a lotus. In the skull cup, a syllable upon a sun disk radiates light rays in the shape of hooks that transform realms into light and draw the pristine-awareness mandala into the space in front. The steps of offering and praise are performed, after which the deities of the pristine-awareness mandala are made to enter the deities of the visualized (pledge) mandala, are bound in them, and made to dwell in bliss. Immediately, one imagines at one's heart a red Hevajra with one face and two hands with consort, the pristine-awareness being, at whose heart abides the contemplation lord. At the heart of Nairatmya and hearts of the other deities, one imagines pristine-awareness beings in whose hearts are the respective insignia, the curved knife, etc. These steps are known as "the pristine-awareness mandala" (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 88a8-b5; Rahulaguhya, f. 110a2-b1).
- (17) Initiation (*dbang*): With the merging of the pledge mandala and pristine-awareness mandala, there arises from one's body a luminous blaze that summons into the space in front the five buddhas, all in the form of Hevajra, as well as the yoginis, the great bodhisattvas, the wrathful ones, and others. One requests them to confer initiation. Thereupon, the five buddhas of the five families, holding vases in their hands and reciting auspicious verses, cleanse one and confer the initiation, while the other deities, rejoicing, cast flowers, and so forth. This is the step called "initiation" (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 88b5-6; Rahulaguhya, f. 110b1-6).
- (18) Sealing (*rgyas gdab*): Following the initiation, the crowns of the heads of all deities of the mandala become adorned with the lords of their respective families. Hevajra and consort, as well as Chauri and the others, become crowned with Akshobhya, Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, and Amitabha. This is the step known as "sealing" (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 89a1-2; Rahulaguhya, f. 110b6).
- (19) Tasting of the nectar (*bdud rtsi myang*): After imagining receiving praise from the deities assembled in the space in front, one visualizes, each arising from its respective syllable, a bow-shaped wind configuration adorned with banners; above that, a tetrahedral configuration of fire; and above that, a skull cup set on three human heads. Inside the skull cup, one visualizes ten syllables that transform into the five nectars and the five "lamps" (i.e., the five kinds of flesh). Above these, a syllable *hum* transforms into a white vajra. The wind causes the fire to blaze, and the heat of the fire causes the substances to boil and become a nectar, silver in color. This nectar, by means of three syllables, is purified, transformed into the nectar of pristine awareness, and increased in magnitude. The same three syllables draw pristine-awareness nectar from space, which is made to merge with the visualized nectar. The white vajra stirs the nectar, making the ingredients of equal taste, and then dissolves into it, cooling the nectar down. Then, oneself and the retinue, each with a vajra tongue, drink the nectar, while making this act an inner-fire rite. These visualizations constitute what are known as "tasting the nectar" (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 89a7-b4; Rahulaguhya, f. 111a3-b1).

- (20) The welfare of beings (*'gro ba'i don*): Next, oneself and the deities send forth emanations to subdue particular beings with the appropriate means, after which the emanations are drawn back. This visualization is known as “the welfare of beings” (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 89b4-5; Rahulaguhyā, f. 111b1-2).
- (21) The six branches (*yan lag drug*): In one's heart, between moon and sun disks is visualized a syllable *hum* that radiates light. In the heart of the pristine-awareness being, on a lotus and between sun and moon disks, is a black *hum*, the lord of contemplation, which transforms into a sphere. The light of the sphere radiates through the pores of Hevajra, causing the mandala and the deities to blaze with black light. Then, one repeats this visualization, imagining the light to be red, then yellow, green, blue, and finally white. These lights correspond to the different activation rites, the appeasing rite, and so on. This is known as “meditation in six branches,” called “hidden branches” (a summary of Jalandhara, ff. 89b5-90a1; Rahulaguhyā, f. 111b3-7).
- (22) Luminous clarity (*'od gsal*): For this, one imagines that as the breath is exhaled and inhaled, the vowels and consonants are emanated and drawn in. As the letters exit with the breath, their light purifies the major and minor signs and at the same time dissolves everything animate and inanimate, which is then drawn into oneself. Chauri and the other goddesses of the mandala, along with Nairatmya, are absorbed into the aggregates of oneself. Then, one's aggregates dissolve into the moon disk and sun disk, with a syllable between them, at the heart. These three merge into a sphere of light that gradually dissolves into a flame-like tip. Then that tip vanishes into emptiness. This is the contemplative step called “luminous clarity” (a summary of Jalandhara, ff. 90a1-91b1; Rahulaguhyā, ff. 111b7-112b5).
- (23) Emergence (*ldangs ba*): From the state of luminous clarity, one spontaneously emerges in the form of a white Hevajra, peaceful, with one face and two arms, appearing like a reflection in a mirror, adorned with all the signs of a supreme being. This is the step of “emergence” from luminous clarity (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 91b1-2; Rahulaguhyā, f. 112b4-6).
- (24) Mantra recitation (*sngags bzlas*): One first creates, as before, the complete mandala of Hevajra with sixteen arms and the retinue of deities. One then repeats the mantras of the different deities in the manner of the swing recitation (*khyogs kyi bzlas pa*) or the wheel recitation (*'khor lo'i bzlas pa*) (i.e., with the string of syllables of the mantra turning like a wheel, from the mouth of the consort to one's mouth, from there to the secret place, and from there into the lotus of the consort, rising to her mouth, etc); in the manner of the ball recitation (*gong bu'i bzlas pa*) (by visualizing the syllables within a big ball of light, positioned on a sun disk at one's heart); and in the manner of the pledge recitation (*dam tshig gi bzlas pa*) (imagining that the main figures and retinue are reciting the mantra at a slow pace) (a vajra recitation done silently and synchronized with the breath). This is the step called “mantra recitation” (a summary of Jalandhara, ff. 91b6-92a4; Rahulaguhyā, ff. 112b7-113b5).
- (25) Sacrificial food offering (*gtor ma*): For this, one meditates on emptiness and then manifests as Hevajra alone. Next, one follows the steps in “one's favored deity” (the fifth step). At the heart manifests the Hevajra of Vajra Aversion. Having done this, one emanates the ten wrathful ones, who summon the obstacle-mak-

- ers. One orders the obstacle-makers to desist from trouble-making and divides up their ranks by applying the four rites. One then invites the appropriate deities, offers them the sacrificial food while reciting the *sumbani* mantra, and asks them to perform particular tasks. This is the step called “sacrificial offering” (a summary of Jalandhara, ff. 92a4-94a5; Rahulaguhyā, ff. 113b5-116a4).
- (26) Subtle yoga (*phra mo'i rnal 'byor*): For this, one imagines that at the heart channel-wheel is a lotus with eight petals. On each of the petals stands one *ishvari*, and at the heart of each of these, a syllable. One focuses on the subtle tip of the sphere (*nada*) of each of these syllables. Once that meditation has become stable, one emanates countless mandalas of Hevajra with the yoginis of the retinue, filling the universe. This is an encapsulation of the step of “subtle yoga” (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 94a5-b1). Rahulaguhyā presents a more detailed set of visualizations (f. 116a4-b7).
- (27) The second placement (*dgod pa gnyis pa*): Having generated oneself as Hevajra alone, one imagines that from syllables arise ornaments on various parts of the body. These are, in essence, the five buddhas of the five families, plus Vajrasattva, manifesting as ornaments: at the head, a wheel (*'khor lo*), symbol of Akshobhya; at the ears, earrings (*rna lung*), symbol of Amitabha; at the neck, a necklace (*mgul gyi phreng*), symbol of Ratnasambhava; at the upper arms, armlets (*dpung rgyan*), symbol of Vairocana; at the waist, a girdle (*ske rags*), symbol of Amoghasiddhi; and over the entire body, smeared ash, symbol of Vajrasattva. In this way, in the forms of those ornaments, all the transcendent ones are worn on one's body. Moreover, one visualizes the syllable representing Vajra of Delusion at the eyes, and so forth. These visualizations are known as “second placement.” Jalandhara calls this visualization the “second armor” (*go cha gnyis pa*) (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 94b1-4; Rahulaguhyā, ff. 116b7-117a3). (The first placement is step thirteen.)
- (28) The way of being (*bzhugs pa*): Wearing that protective armor, and in the form of Hevajra with one face and two arms, the yogin becomes like a lion, abiding in the celestial palace of the three worlds whose creatures are all buddhas. Since everything is the mandala and deities, the mind cannot be deceived (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 73a6, f. 94b4-6; Rahulaguhyā, f. 117a3-5). Rahulaguhyā calls this step “the way of being”; Jalandhara, “walking about” (*'chag pa*). Read *'cha* for *'chang*.
- (29) Eating (*bza' ba'i cho ga*): One consecrates the food and drink as in the step of “tasting the nectar” (step nineteen) and then partakes of them. This is the “eating ritual” (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 94b6-7; Rahulaguhyā, f. 117a5-6).
- (30) Conduct (*spyod lam*): Conduct refers to the style of behavior of the yogin and particularly to the special tantric activities that enhance one's experiences and realization. As taught in the chapter on Conduct in the *Hevajra Root Tantra* (vol. Nga, f. 7a1-b2), one should forsake greed, delusion, fear, anger, and any actions that will bring shame or regret. Once one has made an offering of one's own body without judgment as to the worthiness of the recipient, one performs tantric activities free from doubts or hesitation. One enjoys whatever food and drink one finds, without judgment as to quality. As long as one's experience is weak, one should continue to perform the tantric activities in one's own abode, at night and in secret, but once signs of experience, warmth, and so on, have

arisen, one can practice them freely, wherever and whenever one wishes. This is the step known as “conduct” (a summary of Jalandhara, ff. 94b7-95a5; Rahulaguhyā, f. 117a6-b4).

- (31) Sleeping (*nyal*): When one desires to sleep, one first practices the yoga of generating oneself as Hevajra and then sleeps like a lion. This is the yoga of “sleep” (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 95a5; Rahulaguhyā, f. 117b4-5).
- (32) Re-emerging (*slar ldang*): One imagines that one has again manifested in form, owing to Pukkasi and the other goddesses of the mandala having urged one to do so with songs. This is the step of “re-emerging” (a summary of Jalandhara, f. 95a5-6; Rahulaguhyā, f. 117b5-6).

CHAPTER 4: VISUALIZATION SEQUENCES

- 1 The qualities that a suitable candidate for the secret mantra way must possess are presented in Book Five of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*; see *Treasury of Knowledge: Buddhist Ethics* (English translation), pp. 54-55.

The “three special qualities” (*khyad par gsum*) spoken of here are inalienable faith in the principles of cause, path, and result as set forth in the indestructible way (*vajrayāna*); intense effort in pursuing areas of study, reflection, and meditation, with the wish to awaken in that very lifetime or at least within the intermediate period before rebirth, and to do so for the sake of all beings; and the supreme good fortune of being naturally endowed with wisdom, as well as other qualities, having awakened the special potency of one’s affinity for the universal way. For these and the three types of confidence needed in a student of tantra, see Kongtrül’s *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 202-204.

The common path refers to the individual way (*hinayāna*) and the universal way (*mahāyāna*); the uncommon path, to the indestructible way (*vajrayāna*) of secret mantra.

- 2 *Sarvabuddhasamayoga* (Toh. 366), vol. Ka, f. 164b2-3. In the Kangyur, the highest yoga tantras (*anuttaratantra*) are divided into mother and father tantras. The mother and father tantras are listed according to the buddhas of the various families, five for the mother tantras and six for the father. However, the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga*, a mother tantra, is related to all of these buddhas and for this reason is classified as a tantra on its own. See Wayman’s *The Buddhist Tantras: Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism*, p. 234.
- 3 A commentary on this tantra by Indranala explains that those who do not please the sacred master, have not entered the mandala, do not abide by the pledges, or lack correct understanding of the secret principle—although they may practice to the point of exhaustion—will not achieve any results. See Indranala’s *Exposition of the Buddhasamayoga* (Toh. 1659), vol. Ra, f. 340b4-6.
- 4 *Guhyasamāja Root Tantra* (Toh. 442), vol. Ca, f. 111b1-2. The citation as it appears in the Dergé Kangyur differs from that of *IOK*. It appears in a somewhat similar form in Nagarjuna’s *Large Commentary on the Eighteenth Chapter [of the Guhyasamāja Tantra]* (Toh. 1784), where its words are explained from different perspectives.

The Guhyasamāja father tantra comprises root tantras, a continuation tantra, and explanatory tantras. It is said that there formerly existed two root tantras of the Guh-

yasamaja. A large one of 25,000 verses is no longer extant. An abridged root tantra, divided into seventeen chapters, is now provisionally considered to be the root tantra. Appended to it is an eighteenth chapter, called the *Continuation Tantra*, which is viewed as an explanatory tantra since it expounds the difficult points of the root tantra through fifty-three questions and answers. The following are considered to be the six explanatory tantras of the Guhyasamaja: *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 443), just mentioned (the eighteenth chapter of the Guhyasamaja tantra); *Dialogue with the Four Goddesses* (Toh. 446); *Prophetic Declaration of Intention Tantra* (Toh. 444); *Indestructible Garland* (Toh. 445); *Vajrajñanasamuccaya* (Toh. 447); and the *Dialogue with Shakra* (*lHa'i dbang pos zhus pa*) (this last was not translated into Tibetan). The *Guhyasamaja Tantra* (as well as its *Continuation*) found in the Dergé edition of the Kangyur is a joint translation of the Indian master Shraddha-karavarman and the Tibetan Rinchen Zangpo.

- 5 According to Nagarjuna, a “region of great isolation” (*dgon pa chen po'i sa phyogs*) means an area such as the Vindhya Hills (in India). Isolation is necessary in order to cultivate understanding of the basic nature of reality. In a place endowed with abundant pristine rivers, the mind becomes peaceful. A place “where flowers and fruit trees adorn” refers to a conducive region near mountains where one can enter contemplations in which are emanated complex mandalas and deities. “Seclusion” means a deserted shrine, or the like, where no other person lives. In such places as these, one will attain all powers, ordinary and supreme, through cultivation of the two phases, creation and completion.
 “Great isolation” in its hidden sense refers to the truth of no-self of phenomena and that of persons. The “region” for practice is explained by the buddhas to mean the illusory body. A place “where flowers and fruit trees adorn,” or “a mountain surrounded by the gods,” refers to the supreme body of a buddha, endowed with the thirty-two marks of perfection. “Seclusion” means total emptiness, transcending all phenomena (a summary of Nagarjuna’s *Large Commentary on the Eighteenth Chapter [of the Guhyasamaja Tantra]*, Toh. 1784, vol. Sa, f. 160b3-7).
- 6 Buddhashrijñana’s *Sadhana called Samantabhadra* (Toh. 1855), vol. Di, f. 29a3-4. This is a renowned sadhana of Guhyasamaja in the Jñanapada commentarial tradition.
- 7 In the Guhyasamaja tantra, several deities are taken as the main figures, primarily Akshobhyavajra, but also Manjuvajra and Avalokiteshvara. Here, Manjushri refers to the main figure in the Guhyasamaja mandala.
- 8 *Kalachakra Concise Tantra* (Toh. 362), vol. Ka, f. 78a7-b1.
- 9 This would mean one of the eight major stupas (*mchod rten chen po bryad*) where the relics of the Buddha were enshrined.
- 10 One finds different lists of the eight powers (*dngos grub bryad*) set forth in the Buddhist tantras. Moreover, the powers themselves are interpreted in various ways. An often-quoted list is that given in the *Indestructible Tent Tantra*: the power of the eye-salve (*mig sman*) that enables one to see the three realms of existence; swiftness of foot (*rkang mgyogs*) or speed-walking, achieved by applying an ointment to the feet, that enables one to travel great distances in short times; the power of the sword (*ral gri*) that enables one to fly; the ability to see underground (*sa 'og*) in order to discover

treasures; the power of the pill (*ril bu*) that enables one to assume whatever form one desires; the power of celestial realms (*mkha' spyod*) or ability to shift to other dimensions of existence; the ability to become invisible (*mi snang ba*) by applying a substance to the forehead; and the power of alchemy (*bcud len*) in order to extend one's life and rejuvenate the body through elixirs. See also Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), p. 390, n. 2. For an extensive discussion, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 629-640.

- 11 The power derived from practice with an action seal (*las rgya'i dngos grub*) here refers to one type of power in a triad of powers or attainments. According to the Kalachakra, the applications of the three types of seals, the action seal (*las rgya, karmamudrā*), the pristine-awareness seal (*ye rgya, jñānamudrā*), and the great seal (*phyag rgya chen po, mahāmudrā*), produce the experiences of the moving bliss, vibrating bliss, and non-vibrating, or unchanging, bliss, respectively. These three forms of bliss result in the attainment of powers. Through the first two, one gains the ordinary power of lordliness over the realm of desire and the realm of form; through the last, one attains the supreme perfection of omniscience (R. Gnoli and G. Orofino, trans., *Naropa, Iniziazione Kalacakra*, in Italian, p. 327).
- 12 This paragraph is found in Kedrup Norzang Gyatso's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*. Here, the work of Kedrup Norzang reads *bsang*, while *IOK* reads *bsad*. The translation is in accordance with Kedrup Norzang's work.
- 13 See previous note. Here, the work of Kedrup Norzang reads simply *zhi rgyas*, while *IOK* reads *zhi rgyas rim 'debs*. The translation is in accordance with Kedrup Norzang's work.
- 14 Ordinary powers (*thun mong gi dngos grub*) are usually understood as the lesser, middling, and greater types of powers. The first includes being able to travel to celestial realms through the power of the sword, to extend one's life through the power of an elixir, and so forth (see above, Chapter 4, n. 10). The middling includes becoming like the gods of the desire realms, performing miraculous feats, and attaining all that one desires. The greater type includes being able to travel to different buddha realms and to listen to the buddhas give teachings, attaining the status of a god of the form realm, and performing deeds for the welfare of beings through various emanations. See Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 111-113; 122-123.

The subtle activation rites (*las phra mo*), when not considered as a separate group, are included in the category of lesser powers. These rites are performed to enhance one's own or others' spiritual scope. The ability to perform these is gained as an effect of the practice of deity yoga and repetition of a prescribed number of mantras. Although unlimited in number and mode, they are usually classed as the four major types, or enumerated as eight, twelve, and fourteen rites. The four types are pacifying or appeasing (*zhi ba'i las*); enriching or expanding (*rgyas pa'i las*); influencing or dominating (*dbang gi las*); and implementing fierce or forceful methods (*drag po'i las*). See *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 632-633.

The special techniques (*'grub tshul khyad par can*) include fire offering, mantra recitation, contemplation, physical yoga, and the use of esoteric diagrams. For examples, see Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 136-139.

- 15 *Yantra* (*'kbrul 'khor*) here refers to an esoteric diagram, usually that of a multi-spoked wheel, with mantras, worn at specific spots of one's body (the upper arm, navel, head, armpit, etc.) or placed in an amulet box in order to accomplish certain purposes such as appeasement and protection. For examples, see Martin Willson's *In Praise of Tara* on circles for the rites of the four activities, pp. 81-84.
- 16 Read *spyi'i chings* for *spyi'i chos*.
- 17 Sacrificial food offering or *torma* (*gtor ma, bali*): In ancient India, various common foods in their edible forms were used for this offering, in some cases, to represent bodily substances. In Tibet, in what became a highly ritualized practice, the offering was formed of dough made from roasted barley flour mixed with butter, and molded, painted, and decorated with butter in different ways according to the specifications of the ritual of the deity to whom the offering was being made. In some rites, the offering is simply an offering given for a specific purpose; in others, it is consecrated as the deity being practiced and thus comes to represent the deity. Later, by eating the consecrated item, the practitioner becomes one with the nature of the deity.
- 18 Elemental spirits (*'byung po, bhūta*): a class of malignant beings belonging to the starving spirit class. For examples of this rite, see Durjayachandra's *Sacrificial Offering to All Elemental Spirits* (Toh. 1241), vol. Nya, ff. 154-155; and Krishna's (Kahna) *Rite of Sacrificial Offering to All Elemental Spirits* (Toh. 1300), vol. Ta, ff. 198-199.
- 19 *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 418), vol. Nga, f. 23a2.
- 20 There will be good results in that the yogin will achieve genuine happiness and the gods will be satisfied, possessed of all the good things of the world. Moreover, the rites of subduing and driving away negative forces, etc., propitiating positive forces, and bringing about happiness and prosperity will be successful if one continually makes this offering to these spirits (*Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations*, Toh. 418, f. 23a2-3).
Yogins who use the post-meditation period to make sacrificial offerings to the elemental spirits while reciting the appropriate mantras will fully accomplish their own and others' aims. Ultimately, they will attain faultless innate bliss. In the meantime, the gods, dakinis, and all beings will be happy. If they make sacrificial offerings regularly, they will be able to influence others and reach desired goals, overcome negative forces through wrathful rites, etc., pacify illness, and increase length of life and positive potential. See Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Hevajra*, f. 263a4-b3.
- 21 *The Ocean of Dakinis Tantra* (Toh. 372) belongs to the Samvara mother tantra class. Saroruhā's elucidation is his very large *Commentary on the King of Yogini Tantras, the Ocean of Dakinis: The Ship* (Toh. 1419), vol. Dza, ff. 1-318.
- 22 *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 418), vol. Nga, ff. 22b7-23a1.
- 23 Protection circle (*srung 'khor*). A single vajra-cross (*sna tshogs rdo rje, viśuvavajra*) with all the empty spaces between its prongs filled by smaller vajras is generally visualized as the ground. The enclosing fence and tent are also made of vajras (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).
- 24 The ten wrathful deities are imagined on the spokes, next to their tips (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).
- 25 See next note.

- 26 Abhayakaragupta describes the deities of the protection circle in his *Awn of Esoteric Instructions* (Toh. 1198), a commentary on the *Samputa*, a tantra of the Hevajra class.

According to his explanation, one imagines a lotus, above which is a syllable that transforms into a sun, marked with the syllable *hum*. This syllable becomes a vajra-cross with the same syllable standing on it. From its light manifests a great mass of vajra-crosses, with no spaces between them, forming a vajra ground, extremely hard and impervious. The ground is surrounded by a high fence, equally hard and impervious, all blazing with light. Above the fence is a canopy with a ceiling and vajra arrows.

Within this protective enclosure, on a multi-petalled lotus, is a sun disk with a syllable that transforms into a yellow wheel with eight spokes, turning clockwise. In the center of the wheel is oneself as Vajrasattva. Light emanating from the syllable at one's heart invites Akshobhya, attended by the ten wrathful deities. Entering by way of one's mouth, they melt into vital essence, flow downward, and enter the lotus of the female deity, where they transform again into Akshobhya and the ten deities. As one utters the specified sound, one imagines that Akshobhya is emanated and absorbed into one's body. As a result, one's body as Vajrasattva becomes the form of Humkara.

Humkara is described as three-faced, the central face blue, the right yellow, and the left green, mouths open, fangs bared, tongues flicking, eyebrows raised and twitching, and three round red eyes looking everywhere. Utterly terrifying in appearance, he continuously roars with the sound of *hum*. He is adorned with a diadem of five skulls, a necklace of fifty human heads, and other bone ornaments. He wears a tiger skin and his body is smeared with human ash. His orange hair flares upward and the crown of the head is adorned by Vajrasattva. With the two hands that hold vajra and bell, he embraces his consort. In the other right hands, he holds a hook and a noose; in the left hands, a skull cup and a staff. Standing with the right leg contracted, he tramples on Bhairava ('jigs byed) and Kalaratri (Dus mtshan ma) on a sun and lotus.

One then utters the specified sound ten times and imagines that the ten wrathful deities are emanated: On the eastern spoke, one visualizes Yamantaka (gShin rje gshed, or gShin rje mthar byed), embracing Vajra Vetali (rDo rje ro lang ma). On the southern spoke is Aparajita (gZhan gyis mi thub pa), or Prajnantaka (Shes rab mthar byed), embracing Aparajiti (gZhan gyis mi thub ma). On the western spoke is Hayagriva (rTa mgrin), also called Padmantaka (Pad ma mthar byed), embracing Bhrikuti (Khro gnyer can ma). On the northern spoke is the black Vighnantaka (bGegs dgra), embracing Ekajati (Ral gcig ma). On the northeastern spoke is Achala (Mi g.yo ba) (also called gTum po chen por khro ba), embracing Vishvavajra (sNa tshogs rdo rje ma). On the southeastern spoke is the blue Takkiraja ('Dod pa'i rgyal po), with a white face and a red one, holding a hook, embracing Vishvaratna (sNa tshogs rin chen ma). On the southwestern spoke is Niladanda (dByug pa sngon po), embracing Vishvapadma (sNa tshogs pad ma). On the northeastern spoke is Mahabala (sTobs po che), embracing Vishvakarmi (sNa tshogs las ma). Above, there is Ushnishachakravartin (gTsug tor 'khor lo can), embracing Khagavajra (Nam mkha' rdo rje ma). Below is the blue Sumbharaja (gNod mdzad rgyal po), embracing Kshitivajra (Sa 'dzin ma).

Takkiraja, Achala, Ushnishachakravartin, and Sumbharaja wear diadems of precious jewels as ornaments; they show their fangs only slightly and have no beards. The other deities have fearsome appearances. Their eyebrows are raised; their hairs, orange and flared upward; eyebrows and beard, also orange. Their bodies, short and stout, are

adorned with eight fierce *nagas*, diadems of five skulls, five bone ornaments, and necklaces of human heads. All ten are standing, with the left leg extended and the right drawn in, on the tips of the spokes, without touching their sun and lotus seats. They are utterly terrifying, blazing like the fire that consumes the world during the aeon of destruction. They project countless emanations that continuously annihilate obstacle-makers throughout the universe. They have six arms; with two, they embrace their consorts who resemble them. They have three faces, the middle one the same color as that of the body. Each has three round eyes. They stand firm on a wheel that spins at a fierce speed, emitting immense light.

Humkara performs the hand gesture of victory over the three worlds (*jig rten gsum gyi nam par rgyal ba'i phyag rgya*). As a result of that gesture, Yamantaka, Prajñantaka, Padmantaka, and Vighnantaka emanate replicas of themselves, who arrive in front of Humkara and ask him what tasks they should perform. By reciting four mantras, Humkara gives them commands. Having received orders, they proceed to the various corners of the universe and using their hand implements, draw in the chiefs of the obstructive forces, thus gaining control over them and then handing them over to the ten wrathful deities. The ten wrathful ones, holding in their left hands daggers (*phur ba, kila*), the lower part of which has the shape of a single-pronged vajra, and the upper part, that of the wrathful deities themselves, force all the obstructive forces into pits situated close to the tips of the spokes. Uttering wrathful mantras, they overcome the obstructive forces and transform them into the single nature of bliss. Those obstructive forces that still persist are forced to flee to great distances. One imagines that all beings throughout the universe become completely free of obstructive forces (a summary of Abhayakaragupta's *Awn of Esoteric Instructions*, Toh. 1198, vol. Cha, ff. 127b5-130a6).

On the spheres of activity of the ten wrathful deities, see Tsongkhapa as cited in Wayman's *The Yoga of Guhyasamaja*, p. 243.

- 27 If an eight-spoked wheel is visualized, there is one wrathful deity imagined above, positioned on the eastern spoke, slightly toward the hub; and one wrathful deity imagined below, positioned on the western spoke, slightly toward the hub (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).
- 28 Lvabapa explains that, having completed the preliminary steps such as offering to one's master, and so forth, one meditates on emptiness. Within emptiness, there manifests a tetrahedron in the center of which, from a seed-syllable, one arises as the simple form of Chakrasamvara, with one face and two arms. One utters the four-faced mantra (*zhal bzhi pa'i sngags, caturmukhamantra*) (*Om sumbha nisumbha hūm hūm phat!* *Om gr̥bna gr̥bna hūm hūm phat!* *Om gr̥bnāpaya gr̥bnāpaya hūm hūm phat!* *Om ānaya ho bhagavan vajra hūm hūm phat!*) (Tsuda Shinichi, trans., *Samvarodaya*, p. 281, n. 3). As one utters each line of this mantra, the immense syllables of the line settle in one direction, east, north, west, and south, respectively.

Then, from each of the lines of syllables of the mantra, there instantly arise two wrathful goddesses, a total of eight, including the four guardians of the gates of the mandala in the cardinal directions. In the cardinal directions are the four goddesses, Crow Face (*Kākāsyā*, Khva gdongs ma) in the east; Owl Face (*Ulūkāsyā*, 'Ug gdongs ma) in the north; Dog Face (*Svānāsyā*, Khyi gdongs ma) in the west; and Pig Face (*Sūkarāsyā*, Phag gdongs ma) in the south. In the intermediate directions are Yama-

dadhi (gShin rje brten ma), Yamaduti (gShin rje pho nya mo), Yamadamritri (gShin rje mche ba ma), and Yamamathani (gShin rje 'joms ma). The goddesses all blaze in an immense mass of red light. Standing on a sun disk with the right leg extended and wearing five bone ornaments, they have short, stout bodies that are utterly terrifying to behold. Each has one face and two hands, the left holding a weapon the lower part of which is in the shape of a dagger and upper part, a deity resembling her own form, and the right holding a hammer. One imagines that the goddesses drive all obstructive forces far away.

Then, one imagines that from the above mantra arises a blazing fence, square in shape and made of vajras, any size one wishes, which one consecrates with a mantra. From the blazing light of the fence, there manifests a syllable from which arises a vajra-cross. From that is formed a vajra-cross ground, consecrated by uttering the appropriate mantra. From the light radiating from the fence and ground there appears a vajra tent with ceiling and canopy. From the canopy, outside the vajra tent, above and in all directions, appears a net of arrows, which one consecrates with the appropriate mantras. Lights emanating from the goddesses, Crow Face and the others, drive the obstructive forces into pits. Iron hooks are used to recapture those who tried to escape. Imagining oneself as the wrathful Humkara, one orders, by uttering the specified mantras, the eight goddesses to confront the obstructive forces with their hand implements. The goddesses carry out the orders, as a result of which the obstructive forces vanish into the state of bliss. The eight goddesses become a mass of light that dissolves into the net of arrows. One then imagines that the vajra fence becomes round, following which one performs the creation of the elements of the world, the mandala, oneself as the deity, and so forth (a summary of Lvabapa's *Sadhana of Glorious Chakrasamvara: The Crown Jewel*, Toh. 1443, vol. Wa, ff. 243-251).

The names of the ten wrathful deities who stand on spokes differ slightly from one sadhana of Chakrasamvara to the next. Moreover, some commentaries present only the visualization of oneself as Humkara, the wheel with the ten wrathful deities, and the elimination of obstructive forces, without mentioning the eight goddesses. See Viravajra's *Large Commentary on the Chakrasamvara: Illumination of the Words and Meanings* (Toh. 1412), vol. Ma, ff. 352-450. See also Devagupta's *Large Commentary on All the Essential Points of the Chakrasamvara Sadhana* (Toh. 1407, vol. Ma, ff. 131a3-133a5), where the ten wrathful deities are listed as follows: in the east, blue Vajra Chandali; in the north, yellow Vajra Surya; in the west, red Vajra Ushnisha; in the south, green Amrita Kundali; in the southeast, smoke-colored Vajra Yaksha; in the southwest, red Vajra Kala (or Vajra Nila); in the northwest, blue Vajra Mahabala; and in the northeast, blue Vajra Bhairava; above, white Ushnishachakravartin; and below, blue Vajra Sumbha. Each has three faces and six arms and embraces a consort who resembles him.

29 The *Indestructible Tent Tantra* (Toh. 419, vol. Nga) belongs to yoga tantra. However, as is the case with the *Summation of Essential Principles* (Toh. 479), it is often cited in the discussion of highest yoga tantra.

30 The fostering of positive potential (*bsod nams tshogs bsags pa*) is carried out at the beginning of a tantric sadhana in various ways but all procedures include the seven-fold service (*yan lag bdun pa*). To use as an example Lvabapa's *Sadhana of Glorious Chakrasamvara*, one imagines at one's heart a syllable that transforms into a sun disk.

On top of that is the deity's seed-syllable, radiating light of five colors. This light pervades all of one's body, and one feels the "pride" of being the nature of one's favored deity. The light exits through the pores and draws Chakrasamvara and his mandala, encircled by the eight charnel grounds, into the sky before one. One imagines that in front of the eastern charnel ground, on a jewel-bedecked throne, sits one's master as Chakrasamvara atop a golden lotus in full bloom.

One pays homage (*phyag 'tshal ba*) to the master, the deities, and all the buddhas. To create the conditions necessary to attain awakening for the welfare of all beings, one makes offerings (*mchod pa*) to the master and others. One imagines that from the seed-syllable at one's heart emanate sixteen goddesses, such as the goddess who plays a *vina*, to perform the outer offerings. Four goddesses, Matangi and three others, holding skull cups full of nectar, perform the inner offerings. The master experiences supreme bliss with the consort, which is the offering of the essential nature. After these offerings are made, in front of the master, the deities, and the buddhas, one confesses and apologizes for mistakes committed (*sdigs pa bshags pa*) and promises not to repeat them in the future. One rejoices in all the virtuous actions (*dge ba rjes su yi rangs ba*) done by the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and ordinary people. One dedicates (*bsngo ba*) the effects of one's own good deeds to the goal of attainment of unsurpassable awakening. One resolves that until that goal is realized, one will continuously take refuge (*skyabs su 'gro ba*) in Chakrasamvara, the union of all buddhas, in his teachings, and in the dakini of the mandala. One urges all buddhas to promulgate the teachings (*chos kyi 'khor lo bskor ba bskul ba*) so that the obscurations of all beings may be removed. One entreats the buddhas not to pass into perfect peace (*mya ngan las mi bda' bar gsol ba 'debs pa*) but to remain for aeons equal in number to all the particles contained in all realms of existence. With the exception of the taking of refuge, which is usually set apart, these constitute the sevenfold service (*yan lag bdun pa*) of homage, offerings, confession, rejoicing, dedication, urging the buddhas to turn the wheel of the teachings, and requesting them not to pass into perfect peace. (These seven may be performed in a different order.)

After the sevenfold service, one resolves to awaken in order to be able to guide all beings to the awakened state and asks the buddhas to place one firmly on the path of tantra. One imagines being empowered in this way by them. Thereafter, one recites the one-hundred-syllable mantra of Vajrasattva. Oneself, the master, and all the others dissolve; one remains in a state free from the conceptions of the one who offers, the recipient, and the object offered (a summary of Lvabapa's *Sadhana of Glorious Chakrasamvara: The Crown Jewel*, Toh. 1443, vol. Wa, ff. 244a7-245b4).

Although not mentioned here, the four boundless qualities of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity are also contemplated at this point as a preliminary to the main part of every extended tantric sadhana.

- 31 *stong nyid btsan thabs su sgom pa; gzbig nas sgom pa.*
- 32 Atisha's *Analysis of the Sequence of Visualization* (Toh. 1490), vol. Zha, f. 189b1-2. This text is an explanation of the sadhana of Chakrasamvara.
- 33 The two mantras are those mentioned just above in the translated text, paragraph beginning "The fostering of pristine awareness...."
- 34 A source of phenomena (*chos 'byung, dharmodaya*) is imagined as a tetrahedral shape,

the tip pointing downward and the base facing upward. All steps of the visualization procedure take place within it, and thus it is known as “source of all phenomena,” including all the qualities of buddhas. In reality, it is emptiness, the nature that pervades all that exists and from which all that exists manifests (Abhayakaragupta’s *Awn of Esoteric Instructions*, Toh. 1198, vol. Cha, f. 5a2-5).

Corresponding to the creation of the world according to ancient Indo-Tibetan cosmology (see Kongtrul’s *Treasury of Knowledge: Myriad Worlds*, English translation, pp. 108-111; 148-149), in the phase of creation, one imagines that within space form four elements, representing the principal properties of subtle as well as coarse matter. First is wind; above that, fire; then water; and then earth. These are the tiers of the elements (*’byung ba rim brtsegs*). The elements manifest from syllables and have specific shapes and colors: wind manifests from the syllable *yam* as a blue semicircle; fire, from the syllable *ram* as a red triangle; water, from the syllable *kham* as a white circle; and earth, from the syllable *lam* as a yellow square.

- 35 *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 417), vol. Nga, f. 12a5-6. In the Dergé Kangyur version, the fifth line reads *sna tshogs*, whereas *IOK* reads *la sog*s.

- 36 *Abhidhana Tantra* (Toh. 369), vol. Ka, f. 256b4-5.

- 37 The main elements of the mandala of residence symbolize the thirty-seven factors for awakening (*byang chub kyi phyogs kyi chos sum cu so bdun*). The four sides and the vajra lines symbolize the five powers (*dbang po lnga*); the four gates, the four applications of mindfulness (*dran pa nye bar bzhag pa bzhi*); the four archways, the four perfect abandonments (*yang dag pa’i spong ba bzhi*); the four crossbars over the archways, the four miraculous powers (*rdzu ’phrul gyi rkang pa bzhi*); the four corners of the palace and the ornamental loops and tassels, the five strengths (*stobs lnga*); the eight pillars, the eight aspects of the noble path (*’phags lam yan lag brgyad*); the portals, balconies, parasols, yak tail fans, canopies, bells, and banners, the seven aspects of awakening (*byang chub kyi yan lag bdun*) (Rahulaguha’s *Sadhana of Hevajra called Luminous*, Toh. 1238, vol. Nya, f. 102b4-6).

The four-sided mandala symbolizes the sameness of all phenomena; being engulfed in flames and emitting lights of five colors, the five pristine awarenesses; the four portals, the four applications of mindfulness; the resplendence, the overcoming of the four “demons”; the ornamental loops, the overcoming of the primary afflictions; the ornamental tassels, the overcoming of the secondary afflictions; the garlands, etc., the seven factors for awakening; the yak fan, the wisdom of the path; and the eight pillars, the eight freedoms (Kongtrul’s *Commentary on the Hevajra*, f. 162b3-6).

The special meanings of the thirty-seven factors are described by Jalandhara in his *Sadhana of Hevajra* (Toh. 1237, vol. Nya, ff. 78b5-81a5). His detailed explanation of these factors stems from the teachings of Saroruha.

- 38 *Samvarodaya Tantra* (Toh. 373), vol. Kha, f. 286a5-6.

- 39 Violently Hostile is located in the east; Wild Thicket, in the south; Blazing Vajra, in the west; and Place of Skeletons, in the north. The names of the eight charnel grounds (*dur khrod, smasana*) differ from one tantra to the next although having many similarities. For example, see Chapter 3, n. 116.

- 40 According to Jalandhara, the eight charnel grounds represent the purities of the eight consciousnesses (*rnam par shes pa brgyad*): the five sense consciousnesses (*rnam shes*

lnga), that of the eye, and so forth; the ground-of-all consciousness (*kun gzhi'i rnam shes*); the subjective consciousness (*yid kyi rnam shes*); and the afflicted consciousness (*nyon mongs pa can gyi yid*). The purities of these consciousnesses are symbolized by the eight examples of illusion: an image in a mirror (*me long nang gi gzugs brnyan*), a dream (*rmi lam*), a magical creation (*rnam 'phrul*), an optical illusion (*smig rgyu*), a city of *gandharvas* (*dri za'i grong khyer*), an echo (*sgra brnyan*), a reflection on water (*chu nang gi gzugs brnyan*), and space (*nam mkha'*). In order that conceptions of apprehender, apprehended, and so forth, be overcome through knowledge of all phenomena, the charnel grounds are to be understood through those eight examples that symbolize the purities of the eight consciousnesses (Jalandhara's *Sadhana of Hevajra*, Toh. 1237, vol. Nya, f. 78a7-b2).

Each charnel ground is characterized by various features: a particular tree (*shing*), a *yaksha* (*gnod shyin*), a guardian of one direction (*phyogs skyong*), a *naga* (*klu*), a particular cloud formation in the sky above (*sprin*), a mountain (*ri*), and a stupa (*mchod rten*). Rahulagupta describes the features of the charnel ground in each direction:

In the eastern charnel ground are found a *shirisha* tree; an elephant-faced *yaksha*; Indra as the guardian of the direction; the yellow *naga* called Vasuki; a multicolored cloud formation called Roaring; a square four-colored Mount Meru made of precious substances; and a white stupa called Vajra.

In the southern charnel ground are found a mango tree; a buffalo-faced *yaksha*; Yama as the guardian of the direction; the white *naga* called Padma; a multicolored cloud formation called Whirling; the white Malaya Mountain; and a black stupa called Vajra.

In the western charnel ground are found an *ashoka* tree; a crocodile-faced *yaksha*; Varuna as the guardian of the direction; the red *naga* Karkatika; a multicolored cloud formation called Terrifying; the white Kailasha Mountain; and a white stupa called Vajra of Passion.

In the northern charnel ground are found an *ashvatta* tree; a human-faced *yaksha*; Kubera as a guardian of the direction; the black *naga* Takshaka; a multicolored cloud formation called Sounding *Hur Hur*; the green Mandarava Mountain; and a white stupa called Vajra Formation.

In the northeastern charnel ground are found a *nyagrodha* tree; an ox-headed *yaksha*; the white Ishana as the guardian of the direction; the yellow *naga* Shankhapala; a multicolored cloud formation called Fierce; the black Powerful Mountain; and a white stupa called Vajra Mind.

In the southeastern charnel ground are found a *karanjaka* tree; a goat-headed *yaksha*; the red Agnideva as the guardian of the direction; the azure *naga* Varuna; a multicolored cloud formation called Thick; the yellow Gandamadana Mountain; and a red stupa called Vajra Body.

In the southwestern charnel ground are found a *lataparkati* tree; a bear-headed *yaksha*; the black Nairiti as the guardian of the direction; the white *naga* Ananta; a multicolored cloud formation called Filling; the mountain called Gold; and the white stupa called Precious Vajra.

In the northwestern charnel ground are found an *arjuna* tree; a deer-headed *yaksha*; the azure Vayudeva as the guardian of the direction; the multicolored *naga* Kulika; a multicolored cloud formation called Raining; the blue Shri Parvata Mountain; and the green stupa called Vajra of the Doctrine.

All the *yakshas* in the charnel grounds possess miraculous powers. They are one-

faced and two-armed, and half of their bodies emerge from the tree. Each holds a human skull filled with blood in the left hand and a lotus with different scents in the right.

Moreover, the charnel grounds are replete with birds and wild animals and fear-some sights such as skeletons and corpses. There are also shrines, temples, and hermitages amidst ponds and fields of flowers. All sorts of beings, human and non-human, wander through these charnel grounds. Among the humans are yogins and yoginis, displaying different modes of behavior, some dancing, some singing, some drinking spirits, and so forth (Rahulaguha's *Sadhana of Hevajra called Luminous*, Toh. 1238, vol. Nya, ff. 101a7-102b3).

- 41 "So forth" indicates the other steps of the sequence such as placement of syllables at the senses.
- 42 The citation is found in the *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja* (Toh. 443), vol. Ca, f. 154a4-5. Words expressing the same meaning, but without the two last lines, appear in the *Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 417, vol. Nga, f. 4b7): *yang ni stong pa'i byang chub ste/ gnyis pa la ni sa bon bsdul gsum pa la ni gzugs brnyan rdzogs/ bzhi pa la ni yig 'bru dgod*.
- 43 Read *cho gas* for *tshogs*.
- 44 Atisha's *Analysis of the Sequence of Visualization* (Toh. 1490), vol. Zha, f. 194b1.
- 45 Atisha explains that light radiating from the syllable at one's heart invites the initiating deities (in this example of the Chakrasamvara sadhana, they number twenty-seven). One makes offerings to them and requests initiation. While the eight deities who are under oath (*dka' bsgo brgyad*) dispel obstacles and male and female heroes recite auspicious verses and sing melodious tunes, five deities (the four consorts and Vajravarahi), holding precious vases filled with nectar, confer on oneself the vase initiation. Then, the four consorts dissolve into Vajravarahi. One receives the secret initiation by taking the secret substances of the deities. With Vajravarahi as the seal, one experiences bliss, thus receiving the initiation of pristine awareness through wisdom. The meaning of *shriheruka* is revealed in the fourth initiation, and finally the initiating goddesses dissolve into oneself (Atisha's *Analysis of the Sequence of Visualization*, Toh. 1490, vol. Zha, f. 194b1-4). On the meaning of *shriheruka*, see below, Chapter 9, nn. 25, 26.
 Saroruha (*Sadhana of the Glorious Hevajra*, Toh. 1218, vol. Nya, ff. 4b7-5a2) also explains that the four initiations are taken at this point.
- 46 Atisha's *Analysis of the Sequence of Visualization*, Toh. 1490, vol. Zha, f. 194b6-7. One of the eight points, number seven (*dam tshig dang sdom pa nyams pa bskongs ba*), is missing from Kongtrul's text. It has been included in the translation.
- 47 See above, Chapter 3, n. 65.
- 48 The four sealings (*rgyas gdab pa rnam pa bzhi*) are set forth in Nagarjuna's *Large Commentary*. First is the sealing of the pristine-awareness being (*ye shes sems dpa'i rgyas gdab pa*), which means visualizing at one's heart a pristine-awareness being similar in form to the pledge-being one has visualized. Second is the sealing of the contemplation-being (*ting nge 'dzin sems dpa'i rgyas gdab pa*), which means visualizing the dei-

- ty's seed-syllable at the heart of the pristine-awareness being. Third is the sealing of the crown (representing all the transcendent ones) upon receiving the initiation (*dbang thob nas cod pan gyis rgyas gdab pa*), the crown according in nature with the three beings, the pledge-being, contemplation-being, and pristine-awareness being. Fourth is the sealing of offerings (*mchod pa'i rgyas gdab pa*), which means emanating offering goddesses who accord in nature with the three beings (Nagarjuna's *Large Commentary on the Eighteenth Chapter of the Guhyasamaja Tantra*, Toh. 1784, vol. Sa, f. 302a2-5).
- 49 One of the five patriarchs of the Sakya school, Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen (rJe btsun grags pa rgyal mtshan) (1147-1216) was both a celebrated scholar and yogin. His younger brother was Sönam Tsemo. His main teacher was his father, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo.
 - 50 All seals are considered to be included in this first seal of essential reality. The examples for the symbols given in this section are related to the Hevajra sadhana. Hence, the eight yoginis of the retinue of Hevajra—Pukkasi, Gauri, Shavari, Chauri, Chandali, Vetali, Dombini, and Ghasmari—are mentioned in the second seal, the seal of mind on form.
 - 51 Read *ghas ma ri* for *gha sa ma ri*.
 - 52 See Nagarjuna's *Large Commentary on the Eighteenth Chapter*, f. 302a2-b3, for details on the mutual sealing of family and possessor of family (*rigs dang rigs can phan tshun du rgyas 'debs pa*); mutual sealing of what is created and agent of creation (*bskyed bya dang skyed byed phan tshun du rgyas 'debs pa*); and mutual sealing of cause and result (*rgyu dang 'bras bu phan tshun du rgyas 'debs pa*).
 - 53 Vajragarbha discusses sealing in his *Commentary Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 1180) (see ff. 96a3-105b6) in the context of his explanation of the fourth chapter of Book Two of the *Two Examinations Hevajra Tantra*.
 - 54 *Two Examinations* (Toh. 418), vol. Nga, f. 20a2.
 - 55 Vajragarbha compares the significance of the deity being sealed with the buddha of the particular family to which the deity belongs to that of a woman's signs and characteristics of lineage and family that were used to determine a suitable marriage. See *Commentary Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 1180), vol. Ka, f. 96b3-4.
 - 56 See above, Chapter 3, n. 116.
 - 57 The hell of Ceaseless Torture (*mnar med, avīci*), according to ancient Indian cosmology, is the lowest of the eight hot hells, situated twenty thousand leagues below the Indian subcontinent (see Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Myriad Worlds*, English translation, pp. 113-115). Shariputra, one of the most outstanding disciples of the historical Buddha, was able to use his mastery of creation-phase meditation to transform the fires of that hell into water.
 - 58 This is a reference to the contemplations that enable one to achieve the four levels of meditative stability of the form realm. After attaining peacefulness of mind (*zhi gnas, śamatha*), in order to become free of the emotional affliction of desire characteristic of the desire realm, one contemplates the "coarse" (*rags*) qualities (i.e., the faults) of the environment and inhabitants of the desire realm and the "peaceful" (*zhi*) quali-

ties (i.e., the lack of faults) of the first meditative state of the form realm. In this way, the meditator temporarily suppresses the emotional afflictions of the desire realm and attains the first state of meditative stability of the form realm. To attain the remaining three meditative states of the form realm, this process is repeated; that is, one contemplates the “coarse” qualities of the first state and the “peaceful” qualities of the second state of meditative stability, and so forth. See Lati Rinbochay et al., *Meditative States in Tibetan Buddhism*.

- 59 To turn body and mind into pristine awareness (*lus sems ye shes su bsgyur ba*) means the transformation of the body into the form dimension of awakening (*gzugs sku, rūpakāya*) and the mind into the reality dimension (*chos sku, dharmakāya*) (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication). In this context, *byin rlabs* has been translated as “transformative power” in place of the more common “blessing” or “consecration.”
- 60 *Five Stages of Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1433), vol. Wa, f. 224b6.
- 61 Great seal (*phyag rgya chen po*) or mahamudra. Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche distinguishes the three aspects of mahamudra—ground, path, and fruition—by defining ground mahamudra as the mind’s non-arising essence, unobstructed nature, and expression manifest in manifold ways; path mahamudra as naked, ordinary mind left to rest in unfabricated naturalness; and fruition mahamudra as the final seizing of the dharmakaya throne of nonmeditation (Introduction to Tsele Natsok Rangdrol’s *Lamp of Mahamudra*, English translation, p. xiv).
- 62 The seven features (*yan lag bdun*) or seven features of union (*kha sbyor yan lag bdun ldan*) that characterize the state of Vajradhara: one, complete enjoyment (*longs spyod rdzogs pa*), which means to possess the thirty-two major and eighty minor marks of a great being; two, embrace (*kha sbyor*), which means union with the self-manifesting awareness seal; three, great bliss (*bde ba chen po*), which means to dwell in the essence of innate bliss; four, being devoid of inherent nature (*rang bzhin med pa*), the emptiness free from conceptual elaborations; five, being filled with compassion (*snying rje yongs gang*), which means always having unbiased compassion for all beings; six, an unending stream (*rgyun mi ’chad pa*), which means an eternal unfolding of the dimensions of awakening and pristine awareness; and seven, an uninterrupted presence (*’gog pa med pa*), which means always abiding in a formless state of absorption while continuously manifesting form dimensions (*IOK*, vol. III, p. 658).
- 63 Here the subtle seems to refer to the form of the deity that appears vividly and spontaneously.
- 64 See above Chapter 3, n. 82.
- 65 Upper and lower nose-tips (*steng ’og gi sna rtse*) refers to the three nose-tips in the system of the Guhyasamaja: the nose-tip of the secret place; the nose-tip of the face; and the nose-tip of the heart. See below, Chapter Seven, section entitled “The Guhyasamaja Completion Phase.”
- 66 *dran pa gcig pa la gnas pa*
- 67 Prajnendraruchi’s *Blazing Jewel Sadhana* (Toh. 1251), vol. Nya, f. 229a4.
- 68 *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 418), vol. Nga, f. 27b6-7.

69 Other aspects of the purity of the deity, in the case of Hevajra, include the sixteen arms of Hevajra that signify the sixteen emptinesses (*stong nyid bcu drug, ṣoḍaśśūnyatā*): the inner emptiness (*nang gi stong pa nyid, adhyātma śūnyatā*) (the emptiness of the sense powers); the outer emptiness (*phyi'i stong nyid, bahirdhā śūnyatā*) (the emptiness of the sense objects); both inner and outer emptiness (*phyi nang gi stong nyid, adhyātana bahirdhā śūnyatā*) (the emptiness of the mind that regards these as empty); the emptiness of emptiness (*stong nyid kyi stong nyid, śūnyatā śūnyatā*) (the emptiness of the mind that regards everything as empty); the great emptiness (*stong nyid chen po, mahā śūnyatā*) (the emptiness of the various directions, east, etc.); the ultimate emptiness (*don dam pa'i stong nyid, paramārtha śūnyatā*) (the emptiness of the transcendence of suffering); the emptiness of the created, or compounded (*'dus byas kyi stong nyid, saṃskṛta śūnyatā*) (the emptiness of the three realms of existence); the emptiness of the uncreated, the noncompounded (*'dus ma byas kyi stong nyid, asaṃskṛta śūnyatā*) (the emptiness that is the lack of arising, abiding, and cessation); the emptiness beyond extremes (*mtsha' las 'das pa'i stong nyid, atyanta śūnyatā*) (the emptiness of nihilistic and eternalistic views); the emptiness of what is without beginning and end (*thog ma dang mtsha' ma med pa'i stong nyid, anavaragra śūnyatā*) (the emptiness of going and coming); the emptiness of what is not to be relinquished (*dor ba med pa'i stong nyid, anavakāra śūnyatā*) (emptiness itself); the emptiness of an inherent nature (*rang bzhin gyi stong nyid, prakṛti śūnyatā*) (the emptiness that is the inherent nature being uncreated); the emptiness of all phenomena (*chos thams cad kyi stong nyid, sarvadharma śūnyatā*) (the emptiness of the created and uncreated); the emptiness of self-characteristics (*rang gi mtshan nyid kyi stong nyid, svalakṣaṇa śūnyatā*) (the emptiness of phenomena); the emptiness of non-apprehension (*mi dmigs pa'i stong nyid, anupalambha śūnyatā*) (the emptiness of objects that are not objectifiable in the three times); the emptiness of a truly existent essence (*ngo bo nyid kyi stong nyid, abhāvasvābhava śūnyatā*) (the emptiness of what arises from causes and conditions and is therefore not ultimate) (Padmankuruvajra's *Commentary on the Hevajra Tantra*, Toh. 1188, vol. Ga, f. 206a6-b7). It should be noted that the explanation of these sixteen emptinesses varies on some points from one commentary to the next.

The four legs symbolize the crushing of the four demonic forces, namely, that of the aggregates (*phung po'i bdud*), emotional afflictions (*nyon mongs pa'i bdud*), death (*'chi bdag gi bdud*), and the child god (i.e., self-complacency) (*lha'i bu'i bdud*).

The eight faces symbolize the purity of the eight freedoms (*vmam thar bgyad*): viewing form as empty (*gzugs stong par mthong ba*), viewing the formless as empty (*go skabs med pa stong par mthong ba*), viewing the attainment of knowledge of the pleasant and the unpleasant as empty (*sdug pa dang mi sdug pa'i shes pa thob pa stong par mthong ba*), viewing the attainment of the view as empty (*lta ba byas pa thob pa stong par mthong ba*), viewing the attainment of limitless space as empty (*nam mkha' thob pa stong par mthong ba*), viewing the attainment of nothing whatsoever as empty (*ci yang med pa thob pa stong par mthong ba*), viewing the attainment of the knowledge of no-self as empty (*bdag med pa'i shes pa thob pa stong par mthong ba*), and viewing the cessation within perfect knowledge as empty (*yang dag rig pa 'gog pa stong par mthong ba*) (Jalandhara's *Sadhana of Hevajra*, Toh. 1237, vol. Nya, f. 82a7-b2).

70 *Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 442), vol. Ca. Citation not located.

71 In the *Guhyasamaja*, as well as in other tantras, the aggregates represent the bud-

dhas of the five families, and the elemental properties of the body, the five consorts. The aggregate of forms is Vairochana; the aggregate of discernments, Amitabha; the aggregate of feelings, Ratnasambhava; the aggregate of mental formations, Amogha-siddhi; and the aggregate of consciousnesses, Akshobhya. The elemental property of earth is the goddess Lochana; water, Mamaki; fire, Pandara; wind, Tara; and space, Dhatvishvari.

72 Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord* [*Chakrasamvara*] (Toh.1427), vol. Wa, f. 192.

73 In the Chakrasamvara sadhana, the heroes (*dpa' bo, vira*), or male deities, who symbolize the purity (i.e., true nature) of the vital essences (*thig le*) present in the channels, are visualized at specific spots in the body, united with yoginis (*mal 'byor ma*), who symbolize the purity of the channels of the different parts of the body. The spots where they are visualized are the inner "power places," corresponding to the twenty-four outer power places, Pulliramalaya, Jalandhara, and so forth, as described in the tantras, and to the ten stages of awakening of a bodhisattva.

Pulliramalaya, the head, is the place of the hero Khandakapala with consort, the yogini Prachanda; Jalandhara, crown of the head, the place of Mahakamkala with consort Chandakri; Oddiyana, the right ear, that of Kamkala with consort Prabha-vati; and Arbuda, the back of the head, that of Vikatadamritri with consort Mahanasa. Those four spots where the deities are visualized correspond to the main power places (*gnas, piṭha*).

Godavari, the left ear, is the place of the hero Suravairi with consort, the yogini Viramati; Rameshvara, the middle of the eyebrows, the place of Amitabha with consort Kharvari; Devikota, the eyes, that of Vajraprabha with consort Lankashvari; and Malava, the shoulders, that of Vajradeha with consort Drumachaya. The spots where these deities are visualized correspond to the four related power places (*nye ba'i gnas, upapiṭha*).

Those eight heroes and eight yoginis, blue in color, dwell in space and form the mind mandala.

Kamarupa, the armpits, is the place of Amkuraka with consort Airavati; and Odra, the breasts, that of Vajrajatila with consort Mahabairavi. The spots where these deities are visualized correspond to the fields (*zhing, kṣetra*).

Trishakuni, the navel, is the place of Mahavira with consort Vayuvega; and Kosala, the tip of the nose, that of Vajrahumkara with consort Surabhakshi. The spots where these deities are visualized correspond to the related fields (*nye ba'i zhing, upakṣetra*).

Kalinga, the mouth, is the place of Subhadra with consort Syamadevi; and Lam-paka, the throat, that of Vajrabadhra with consort Subhadra. The spots where these deities are visualized correspond to the meeting places (*tshan dho ba, chandoha*).

Kanchi, the heart, is the place of Mahabhairava with consort Hayakarni; and Himalaya, the pubic area, that of Virupaksha with consort Khagana. The spots where these deities are located correspond to the related meeting places (*nye ba'i tshan dho ba, upachandoha*).

Those eight heroes and eight yoginis, red in color, dwell on earth and form the speech mandala.

Pretapuri, the sex organ, is the place of Mahabala with consort Chakravega; and Grihadevata, the rectum, that of Ratnavajra with consort Khandaroḥa. The

spots where these deities are visualized correspond to the assembling places (*'du ba, mela*).

Sourastra, the thighs, is the place of Hayagriva with consort Saundini; and Suvarnadvipa, the calves, that of Akashagarbha with consort Chakravartini. The spots where these deities are visualized correspond to the related meeting places (*nye ba'i 'du ba, upamela*).

Nagara, the fingers and toes, is the place of Shri Heruka with consort Suvira; and Sindhu, the upper part of the foot, that of Padmanarteshvara with consort Mahabale. The spots where these deities are visualized correspond to the charnel grounds (*dur khrod, śmāsana*).

Maru, the thumbs and big toes, is the place of Vairocana with consort Chakravartini; and Kulata, the knees, that of Vajrasattva with consort Mahavirya. The spots where these deities are visualized correspond to the related charnel grounds (*nye ba'i dur khrod, upaśmāsana*).

Those eight heroes and eight yoginis, white in color, dwell underground and form the body mandala.

The male deities resemble Chakrasamvara and have one face and two arms; the female deities resemble the consort Vajravahni. See Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord* [*Chakrasamvara*] (Toh. 1427), vol. Wa, f. 190a3-b4; and Vajraghantapa's *Chakrasamvara Sadhana* (Toh. 1432), vol. Wa, f. 223a7-b7.

The outer and inner power places correspond to the ten stages of awakening of a bodhisattva. The four main power places correspond to the stage called "joyful" (*pramuditā*); the four related power places, the stage called "stainless" (*vimalā*); the fields, the stage "luminous" (*prabhākari*); the related fields, the stage "flaming" (*arciṣmati*); the meeting places, the stage "realized" (*abhimukhī*); the related meeting places, the stage "invincible" (*sudurjayā*); the assembling places, the stage "going far" (*dūrangama*); the related assembling places, the stage "unshakeable" (*acalā*); the charnel grounds, the stage "fine intelligence" (*sādhumatī*); and the related charnel grounds, the stage "cloud of teachings" (*dharmameghā*) (*Samvarodaya Tantra*, Toh. 373, vol. Kha, f. 276a1-2).

74 Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord* [*Chakrasamvara*] (Toh. 1427), vol. Wa, f. 192a3-4.

75 *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 417), vol. Nga, f. 10b6.

76 *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 417), vol. Nga, f. 10b7.

77 Self-knowing awareness (*rang rig*), one's innate nondual awareness, luminous and devoid of concepts, has the nature of direct yogic cognition, and has never been tainted by obscurations: it is the purity of the innate nature of bliss and emptiness. When this is directly experienced, there arises the knowledge that liberation is not effected through a purity believed to exist outside oneself: this is the purity of one's self-knowing awareness. See Kongtrul's *Meaning of the Hevajra*, ff. 32b5-33a3.

The translation of the last two lines of the citation is based on Ratnakarashanti's *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Hevajra: Garland of Pearls* (Toh. 1189), vol. Ga, ff. 263b7-264a2.

78 Jalandhara's *Sadhana of Hevajra* (Toh. 1237), vol. Nya, f. 91b2-3. This text reads *byin gyis brlabs pa'i rim pa*; while IOK reads *byin gyis brlabs pa zhes bya ba'i rim pa*.

- 79 Ghantapa (Dril bu pa). This citation was not located in Ghantapa's works.
- 80 In the first case, one imagines that the elemental spirits are of the same nature as the deities of the mandala; in the second, one visualizes them as separate beings (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).
- 81 See the brief descriptions of these yogas given in Chapter 3, n. 116.

CHAPTER 5: THE BASES OF PURIFICATION, PURIFICATORY MEANS, AND RESULTS OF PURIFICATION

- 1 Read *sbyor tshul* for *spyod tshul*.
- 2 According to the tantras, the six elements that constitute the body of a human being are the elemental properties of earth (*sa*), water (*chu*), fire (*me*), and wind (*rlung*), and pristine awareness (*ye shes*). This last is the element of blissful pristine awareness (*bde ba ye shes*); here, specifically referring to the pleasure resulting from the release of seminal fluid (Kongtrul's *Commentary on [Rangjung Dorjé's] Profound Inner Reality*, f. 36a4).
- 3 The eighty conceptions (the thirty-three conceptions that have evolved from aversion, forty conceptions from desire, and seven conceptions from delusion) are listed in Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 260-264.
- 4 Read *slad* for *slod*.
- 5 The three stages of light act as gateways to both liberation and cyclic existence, depending on the order, forward or reverse, of their arising. The stages are known as light (*snang ba, āloka*), increase of light (*snang ba mched pa, ālokābhāsa*), and culmination of light (*snang ba thob pa, ālokopalabdhi*), and appear as white radiance (*snang ba dkar lam pa*), red radiance (*snang ba dmar lam pa*), and black radiance (*snang ba nag lam pa*), respectively. They arise from and dissolve into the luminous-clarity nature of the mind. In essence, they are not other than luminous clarity itself. When that nature is not recognized, luminous clarity takes on a coarser aspect.

At the time of death, the three occur in the order of light, increase, and culmination, until luminous clarity manifests; in this sense, they represent steps in which the luminous clarity of the mind unfolds. The three lights occur in this order also when a person is falling asleep, during sexual union, at the time of the initiation, every time an object is perceived, and during the phases of creation and completion.

The three stages of light have increasingly coarse aspects when occurring in the order of culmination, increase, and light. From light manifest the elemental properties that constitute the body of the person, principal among them being wind. Riding on the mount of wind, the coarse eight consciousnesses born from the three lights engage in the dualism of apprehender and apprehended. From them originate countless conceptions that bind one to illusion and cause one to experience suffering. Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* presents a set of eighty different conceptions divided into three groups that correspond to the three stages of light. Thirty-three conceptions of the nature of aversion are associated with light; forty conceptions of the nature of desire are associated with the increase of light; and seven conceptions of the nature of delusion are asso-

ciated with the culmination of light. See Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 251-260. The teachings concerning the three stages of light and luminous clarity are fundamental to the father tantras.

6 Read *rigs mthun* for *rim mthun*.

7 It is taught that if the intermediate-state being feels attraction (*'dod chags*) to the father and aversion (*zhe sdang*) toward the mother, it is to be born as a female; and in the case of the reverse, as a male.

8 This description is found in the second chapter of the *Samvarodaya Tantra* (Toh. 373), vol. Kha, f. 266a7-b1.

9 The only commentary on the *Samvarodaya Tantra* preserved in the Tengyur, that of Ratnakarashanti, explains the first five stages of embryonic development, as enumerated in the tantra, in the following manner: The embryo of the first week is called *nur nur po* (*kalala*) which means a slippery mixture of semen and ovum. The embryo of the second week is called *mer mer po* (*arbuda*), which means that it has a form resembling a bubble on water, empty inside. In the third week, it is called *tar tar po* (*peśī*), a form slightly more solid than that in the first week. In the fourth week, it is called *gor gor po* (*ghana*), which means that it is like flesh enveloped in a very soft membrane. Then, in the stage called “acquired solidity” (*mkhrang 'gyur, praśākhā*), the fetus starts to show the five protuberances that are the beginnings of the four limbs and the head (Ratnakarashanti's *Commentary on the Samvarodaya Tantra*, Toh. 1420, f. 11a2). (As noted in *IOK*, this last stage takes place in the fifth month. This is not specified in the tantra or commentary.)

Moreover, the *Samvarodaya* states that five stages of development represent the forms of the five buddhas: in the first week, the embryo is the form of Akshobhya; in the second, that of Ratnasambhava; in the third, that of Amitabha; and in the fourth, that of Amoghasiddhi; and from the fifth week onward, that of Vairochana (*Samvarodaya*, Toh. 373, vol. Kha, f. 266b2-3).

It is to be noted that the terms for the initial stages of embryonic development are not consistent throughout all tantras and sutras. Moreover, the explanation given in the *Exegetical Treatise* of Tibetan medicine appears to be a mixture of the descriptions found in the discourses *Teaching Nanda about Entering the Womb* (Toh. 58) and *Teaching Nanda about Being in the Womb* (Toh. 58) and in various tantras.

10 The *nada* represents primordial sound. Here it refers to the shape of the flame-like tip that rises from the sphere (*anusvāra*), which indicates the ending nasal sound (as in *ham*). Alankakalasha's *Indestructible Garland Commentary* (Toh. 1795, vol. Gi, f. 166b3) states that *nada* refers to the form of syllable *a*. The shape of *nada* is also described as resembling the last stroke in the formation of the Tibetan letter *a*, a triangular stroke, turned upside down.

11 Craving (*sred pa, tṛṣṇā*) and grasping (*len pa, upadāna*): the eighth and the ninth of the twelve links of dependent origination. These links empower the karma that leads to a particular birth.

12 From the seed-syllable the resultant vajra-holder arises instantaneously.

13 Read *'jug pas* for *'jug las*.

- 14 See above, Chapter 5, n. 9. The stages of the embryo's development are delineated in different ways in the discourses of the Buddha, the tantras, and works on Tibetan medicine. See also Nagabodhi's *Stages in the Presentation of the Guhyasamaja Sadhana* (Toh. 1809), vol. Ngi, ff. 124a1-131b6.
- 15 Sertok Lozang Tsultrim explains that in the first month of pregnancy, from the subtle life-sustaining wind develops a coarse form of the life wind, which causes the embryo to assume a fish-like shape. In the second month, the downward-voiding wind develops, which causes it to take on a turtle-like shape. In the third month, the fire-accompanying wind develops and causes the fetus to assume a pig-like shape. In the fourth month, the upward-moving wind develops and causes it to take on a lion-like shape. In the fifth month, the pervading wind develops, causing it to take on the shape of a miniature human (Sertok Lozang Tsultrim's *Presentation of the Stages and Paths of the Indestructible Way*, p. 91). See also Yang-gönpa's *Secret Description of the Vajra Body*, f. 9.
- 16 Read *lus* for *lugs*.
- 17 Evolutes of the elements (*'byung 'gyur*): the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tangible objects that are the products of the four elements of earth, water, fire, and wind.
- 18 Read *cho gas bskyed* for *tshogs bskyed*.
- 19 The three dimensions (*sku gsum, trikāya*) of awakening: the reality dimension (*chos sku, dharmakāya*), enjoyment dimension (*longs sku, sambhogakāya*), and manifest dimension (*sprul sku, nirmāṇakāya*) are discussed in detail in Gampopa's *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, trans. H. V. Guenther, pp. 257-270.
- 20 This verse points out the dual nature of the creation phase, from one side in accordance with the forms of awakening; from the other, with the processes of birth, death, and the intermediate state (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication). The principle visualization sequence accords with the essential nature of what is to be purified and therefore has the capacity to bring about that purification. Furthermore, it accords with the essential nature of the result and therefore has the capacity to reveal that result (Kongtrul's *Manual for the Performance of Retreat*, f. 13a7).
- 21 Read *sbyong byed* for *sbyor byed*.
- 22 The stage of luminous clarity (*'od gsal gyi rim pa*) is one of the five stages in the Arya Nagarjuna tradition's exposition of the Guhyasamaja completion phase. However, here the luminous clarity of the stage of mind isolation (*sems dben gyi rim pa'i 'od gsal*) refers specifically to the luminous clarity attained on the mind-isolation stage. See Chapter 7, section entitled "The Arya [Nagarjuna] Tradition."
- 23 The final-example luminous clarity (*mthar thug gi dpe'i 'od gsal*) refers to the stage of mind isolation.
- 24 The third-stage illusory body (*rim pa gsum pa'i sgyu lus, māyādeha*) is the real body of the deity that manifests on the stage called illusory body, the third of the five stages of the completion phase according to the Arya tradition of Guhyasamaja.
The body of union (*zung 'jug gi sku, yuganaddhakāya*) equals the dimension of total realization of awakening, which continuously manifests in form bodies. See Chapter 7, section entitled "The Arya [Nagarjuna] Tradition."

- 25 The action seal (*las kyi phyag rgya, karmamudrā*); the pristine-awareness seal (*ye shes kyi phyag rgya, jñānamudrā*). Kedrup Norzang explains that an action seal is a real woman, while the auxiliary of the action seal, the imaginary or pristine-awareness seal, is a goddess created in one's own mind, such as Vishvamata, Kalachakra's consort. See Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), p. 485, n. 1.

CHAPTER 6: THE PHASE OF COMPLETION

- 1 Ground (*gzhi*), path (*lam*), and result (*'bras bu*). Simply stated, "ground" refers to the fundamental nature of reality, that of pristine awareness, the original basis of everything, which may or may not be recognized. "Path" denotes the process, consisting of both meditation and ethical action, that leads to the recognition of the ground. "Result" refers to the actual manifestation of the ground and all of its attributes, which means the full awakening of buddhahood.
- 2 Pundarika's *Stainless Light* (Toh. 1347), vol. Da. Citation not located.
- 3 The meditative concentration of cessation (*'gog pa'i ting nge 'dzin*): the deep state of absorption of an arhat, a "worthy one" who has overcome negative emotions and afflictions and attained the peace of liberation (*nirvāṇa*).
- 4 The four joys (*dga' ba bzhi*): initial joy, supreme joy, special joy, and innate joy. See above, Chapter 3, n. 82.
- 5 *Essence of the Great Seal* (Toh. 420), vol. Nga, f. 80a5. This tantra belongs to the cycle of Hevajra.
- 6 *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations*. Citation is found at ff. 26b7-27a1 of the Dharma Chakra (Rumtek) edition.
- 7 Indrabhūti's *Innately Existent* (Toh. 2260) is found among the commentaries on the *Secret Moon Essence Tantra* (Toh. 477). The following lines (*Innately Existent*, f. 1a5-2a1) seem to be the source of Kongtrul's explanations: *rgyu dang mi rgyu gnas pa las/ dus kun du ni yang dag gnas/ gzhung las ma gtogs rnyed mi 'gyur/ gang dang mtshungs pa skyes pa ni/ des na lhan cig skyes par brjod/ lhan cig skyes pa rtog pa med/ mi rtog las skyes lhan cig skyes*. Ma Palmo explains the words *gzhung las ma gtogs rnyed mi 'gyur* ("it is not found anywhere except in the scriptures") as follows: Although innate reality exists in all the animate and inanimate, it cannot be comprehended except through the words of the master (Ma Palmo's *Commentary on the Innately Existent*, Toh. 2261, vol. Shi, f. 5a3).
- 8 *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 417), vol. Nga, f. 2a5. The next line reads "It abides in the body but has not arisen from it (*lus gnas lus las ma skyes ba'o*)."
- 9 Kongtrul explains that, in the outer sense, "the body" (as in "abides in the body") refers to the appearances of the three realms, which arise as manifestations of innate pristine awareness, the essential reality. In the inner sense, "the body" refers to the body formed of aggregates, elements, and sense fields, or to the body of channels, winds, and vital essences that is of the nature of the deity. In the alternative sense, "the body" refers to the body of the circle of deities of the mandala. In all these "bodies," pristine awareness, the ground, is present. There is no phenomenon any-

where that is not pristine awareness, the nature of mind. Mind nature is self-knowing awareness; self-knowing awareness is bliss; and bliss transcends all concepts. The variety of appearances is the manifest dimension (*nirmāṇakāya*); the clarity of awareness, the enjoyment dimension (*sambhogakāya*); the freedom from conceptual fabrications, the reality dimension (*dharmakāya*); and the bliss, the essential dimension (*svabhāvikakāya*) of awakening. Hence, innate pristine awareness exists as the natures of the four awakened dimensions (*kāya*). It is “great” in that bliss is sealed by emptiness, and emptiness, by bliss. Thus, one speaks of “great pristine awareness that abides in the body.”

Innate pristine awareness is endowed with three attributes. One, it transcends all concepts: the concepts of external objects at the time when all things are realized as the “body” of mind; of subject and object when the mind is realized as self-knowing awareness; and of suffering and indifference when self-knowing awareness is realized as bliss. Two, like space, pristine awareness pervades all things (i.e., the “bodies” mentioned above). Three, although it has always been present in the body, from the very beginning pristine awareness has never arisen as something truly existent; in the interim it does not exist as a mind-apprehended object; and in the end it does not cease when the body dies, just as the space in a vase is not destroyed when the vase is destroyed. See Kongtrul’s *Commentary on the Hevajra*, ff. 18a2-20a3.

Taranatha explains “great pristine awareness abides in the body” as follows: The indestructible essence of the ground-of-all consciousness abides in the body. That essence pervades all phenomena because, being self-knowing awareness beyond all concepts, it has as its object all phenomena and is therefore the nature that causes coming and going. Although abiding within the central channel of the body, pristine awareness does not arise from the body because it is primordial. Hence, it has always been present. One does not need to rely on conceptual meditation to manifest it. See Taranatha’s *Hevajra Tantra Manual of Instructions on the Four Principles of the Completion Phase*, pp. 393,6-397,5.

- 10 The six elements (*khams drug*) of the vajra body (*rdo rje lus*) are earth, water, fire, wind, space, and blissful pristine awareness.

The sixth element, pristine awareness or blissful pristine awareness (*bde ba ye shes*), refers to the bliss or pleasure resulting from the release of seminal fluid (*kbu ba ltung ba'i bde ba*) (Kongtrul’s *Commentary on the Profound Inner Reality*, f. 36a4).

- 11 Union (*zung 'jug, yuganaddha*) generally refers to the union of the illusory body and luminous clarity, at the stage of training and the stage beyond training. However, in this context, the term, although not unrelated to that general meaning, refers to innate reality in the context of the ground, defined as union, which is not projected by dualistic thoughts but abides both within oneself as well as outside oneself, arising neither from oneself nor from outside. See Indrabhuti’s *Innately Existent*, Toh. 2260, vol. Zhi, f. 1a5.
- 12 Vajra yoga (*rdo rje'i rnal 'byor, vajra yoga*) is defined below (Chapter 6, section entitled “Emptiness”) as “familiarization with empty form endowed with the supreme of all aspects, whose essential nature is that of inseparable emptiness and compassion.”
- 13 *stong nyid snying rje'i snying po can gyi byang chub kyi sems*.
- 14 *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 443), vol. Ca, f. 150a4.

- 15 Nagarjuna explains this passage from several different perspectives that describe awakening mind (*byang chub kyī sems, bodhicitta*) as understood in the tantras. The first description is as follows: By nature “beginningless, endless,” it is of the essence of the eternal dimension of reality (*dharmakāya*), beyond birth and cessation. Because of this, it is free from the stains and concepts derived from the imprints of habitual patterns that are related to the defiled (*kun nas nyon mongs pa*) and the pure (*nam par byang ba*); thus, it is “peace.” “Phenomenal” (*dnogs po*) refers to the five aggregates, which are of the nature of the three realms; “nuomenal” (*dnogs med*), to emptiness, and so forth. “Have ceased” (*zad pa*) means that the phenomenal and nuomenal have ceased; thus, awakening mind is devoid of the dualistic appearances of the three realms. By virtue of this, it serves as the causal basis of the two dimensions of awakening, the reality dimension (*dharmakāya*) and the form dimension (*rūpakāya*), which are the real natures of all beings without exception; thus, it is the “sovereign” (*gtso bo*) or “lord” (*bdag po*). “Emptiness” refers to the all-empty (*thams cad stong pa*); “compassion,” to great compassion. Their “inseparability” or union represents the essence of unobscured pristine awareness (*ye shes*) of the nature of awakening (*byang chub, bodhi*). “Mind” (*sems, citta*) refers to the direct experience through yogic perception of the supreme essential reality (*mchog tu ’gyur ba’i de kbo na nyid*), i.e., the completion phase (Nagarjuna’s *Large Commentary on the Eighteenth Chapter [of the Guhyasamāja Tantra]*, Toh. 1784, vol. Sa, f. 295a5-b1).
- 16 *Brief Presentation of the [Kalachakra] Initiation* (Toh. 361), vol. Ka, f. 20a1-2. In the Dergé Kangyur, the first line of this passage reads *stong nyid gzugs brnyan ’dzin pa rgyu*. IOK reads *stong nyid gzugs brnyan gzung ba rgyu*.
- 17 The meaning of this passage is clarified in the next section, entitled “Individual Discussions [on Emptiness and Compassion].”
- In Naropa’s *Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation* (Dergé Tengyur edition, Toh. 1351, vol. Na), *’dzin pa* appears in both of the first two lines of the passage, whereas the first line in IOK reads *gzung ba*; the second line, *’dzin pa*.
- Naropa explains that the cause is the mind (*sems*) that apprehends (*’dzin pa*) the images, that is to say, the emptiness that has a point of reference (*dmigs pa dang bcas pa*); and the result, the mind itself that apprehends that which is unchanging, that is to say, compassion without a point of reference. Their inseparability, the union of this emptiness and compassion, is the bodhicitta that is termed “not emitted (*mi ’pho ba*)” (Naropa’s *Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation*, f. 284b5-6).
- On this subject, Kongtrul writes that the essence of *vam* is consciousness, which serves as apprehending subject, unchanging great bliss: the resultant great seal. The essence of *é* is what is known, the apprehended object, the empty image comprehensive of all knowables: the causal great seal.
- He further explains that the empty image comprehensive of all knowables (*shes bya rnam pa thams cad pa’i stong gzugs*), or causal great seal, and the unchanging great bliss, or resultant great seal, exist only nominally, with a cause-effect relationship; both are primordially present as the nonduality of emptiness and compassion. For a detailed discussion of this, see Kongtrul’s IOK, vol. II, pp. 213-221. See also Kongtrul’s *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 194-197.
- 18 Pundarika’s *Stainless Light* (Toh. 1347), vol. Da. Citation not located.

- 19 Pundarika's *Stainless Light* (Toh. 1347), vol. Da. Citation not located.
- 20 The union of *é* and *vam* in its complete form (of the deity's body) is called the Shri Kalachakra (Wheel of Time), wherein "time" (*kala*) refers to unchanging bliss (method), and "wheel" (*chakra*), the emptiness (wisdom) endowed with the supreme of all aspects. By virtue of being the inseparability of bliss and emptiness, Kalachakra is said to be "glorious" (*shri*) (Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, English translation, p. 200).
- 21 For a detailed discussion of the meaning of *é**vam*, see Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 188-197.
 The eighty-four thousand collections consist of 21,000 teachings of the discipline collection intended to counteract attachment; 21,000 teachings of the discourses (sutra) collection, to counteract aversion; 21,000 teachings of the phenomenology collection, to counteract delusion; and 21,000 teachings of the tantric collection, to counteract all emotional afflictions. The first three sets of teachings form the three collections of the Buddhist teachings (*sde snod gsum, tripiṭaka*)—the collection on discipline (*'dul ba, vinaya*); the collection of discourses (*mdo, sūtra*); and the collection on phenomenology (*mngon pa, abhidharma*). These three collections set forth the trainings in ethics (*tsul khrims, śīla*); contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin, samādhi*); and wisdom (*shes rab, prajñā*), respectively. There are said to be four collections when the mantra system is classed as the separate collection of awareness-holders' teachings. See Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 72, 302-303, and 374, n. 2.
- 22 This means that, through the realization of emptiness, one overcomes the extreme of cyclic existence (*saṃsāra*); and through compassion, the extreme of remaining in a static state of peace (*nirvāṇa*).
- 23 The way of characteristics (*mtshan nyid kyi theg pa*), also known as the causal way of characteristics (*rgyu mtshan nyid kyi theg pa*), denotes the sutra way as opposed to that of mantra. It includes the ways of the proclaimers and solitary sages, which are based on the analyst (*vaibhāṣika*) and traditionist (*sautrāntika*) philosophical systems, and the way of the bodhisattvas, which is based on the idealist (*cittamātra*) and centrist (*madhyamaka*) systems.
 It is known as "the way of characteristics" because it describes in detail the characteristics (*mtshan nyid*) of defiled and pure phenomena of samsara and nirvana. According to another interpretation, it is known as "the way of characteristics" because it points to the path of secret mantra and its branches, which leads directly to the final result (the state of union of Vajradhara). It is known as "causal" (*rgyu*) because it serves as only half of the cause of the pristine awareness of the state of union of non-abiding liberation, the final result (Kongtrul's *IOK*, vol. II, p. 491).
- 24 The sixteen Sanskrit vowels (*a li bcu drug*): *a ā i ī u ū ṛ ṛ ī ṛ ī e ai o au*; plus *anusvara* (*m*) and *visarga* (*h*). We have not been able to find a textual source that discusses the sixteen emptiness-beings (*stong nyid sems dpa' bcu drug*).
- 25 Sixteen emptinesses (*stong nyid bcu drug*) are listed above, Chapter 4, n. 69.
- 26 *Indestructible Garland Tantra* (Toh. 445), an explanatory tantra of the Guhyasa-

- maja. For a discussion of this subject, see also Padmankuruvajra's *Commentary on the Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 1188), vol. Ga, f. 120a6-b7.
- 27 *Samputa Tantra* (Toh. 381). Read *samputa* for *sambuta*.
- 28 Here, *Continuation of the Abhidhana Tantra* refers to Toh. 379 but one may assume that the name includes Toh. 377.
- 29 Read *snang* for *rnam*.
- 30 This verse, as it appears in *IOK*, is not found in the *Indestructible Garland Tantra* (Toh. 445).
- 31 As Kongtrul specifies below, the first three empties are considered as a kind of cause; the fourth, as the result.
- 32 This citation is probably from the original and non-extant tantra of Kalachakra. It does not appear in Toh. 362, the extant *Kalachakra Tantra*. However, it does appear in the *Brief Presentation of the [Kalachakra] Initiation* (Toh. 361) at f. 15a2-3.
- 33 Ten forms of emptiness (*stong pa nyid kyi gzugs bcu*), more commonly known as “ten signs” (*rtags bcu*), specifically related to the sixfold yoga of the Kalachakra tantra, are empty images (*stong gzugs*) to be meditated upon for the actualization of the illusory body. These empty images are not produced by thoughts and are extremely clear. They are manifestations of pristine awareness, free from subject-object duality. They resemble space in that they are free from mental constructs, beyond existent and non-existent phenomena. They are the luminous-clarity nature of one's own mind and also the totality of the dimensions of awakening.

The empty images manifest in infinite ways but are explained to be ten in number when considered in terms of their special importance and what they purify. These ten signs are related to the yoga of the day (*nyi mo'i rnal 'byor*) and the yoga of the night (*mishan mo'i rnal 'byor*). The four signs of the yoga of the night are smoke (*du ba*); mirage (*smig rgyu*); fireflies (*mkha' snang*); and lamp's flame (*sgron me 'bar ba*). The six signs of the yoga of the day are blazing (*'bar ba*) (blazing yellow light); moon (*zla ba*) (blazing white light); sun (*nyi ma*) (blazing red light); Rahu (*sgra gcan/mun can*) (blazing black light); supreme *kala* (*cha*), or lightning (*glog*); and great sphere (*thig le chen po*) (an azure moon globe). After the appearance of these, in the center of the tenth sign, the great sphere, the yogin sees the image of Kalachakra and, simultaneously and instantaneously, the image of everything in the universe (*sna tshogs gzugs brnyan*), as clearly as water in one's hand.

These are called “signs” because they indicate the presence within oneself of ultimate pristine awareness and because they constitute the basis for the confidence that, by cultivating the path, one will be able to manifest pristine awareness. See Taranatha's *Meaningful to Behold*, f. 16a6; Taranatha's *Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation*, f. 25a1-7; and Kedrup Norzang Gyatso's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 235b7-236a2.

Naropa explains that, right after the apparition of a cloud, there is an empty apparition in the form of white smoke, pervading all external and internal things. Next, there is the apparition of a mirage, in the form of shimmering water; then that of fireflies; then of a lamp's flame. These four signs arise in darkness like that of a house

without openings. They constitute the yoga of the night, also called “yoga of [closed] space” (Naropa’s *Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation*, Toh. 1351, vol. Na, f. 259b4-6).

After those, there arise an apparition of a cloudless sky, then the empty apparition of a blazing, like fire, followed by the apparition of the moon, that of the sun, and that of the darkness of Rahu, an apparition resembling a black pattern. Next arise *kala*, the apparition of lightning, and then the great sphere, an apparition in the form of an azure moon orb. These six signs arise in the light of a cloudless sky and thus constitute the yoga of the day, also called “yoga of open space.” Right after, one sees in that great sphere the image of the Buddha (i.e., Kalachakra), the essence of the enjoyment dimension of awakening. At the same time, in a single moment, one sees everything—all phenomena in the universe—as clearly as water in the palm of one’s hand: this is the universal image that is luminous clarity (*sna tshogs gzugs brnyan ’od gsal ba*) (Naropa’s *Commentary*, ff. 259b7-260a4).

On the nature of these signs, Naropa explains that they are proclaimed in the root tantra of Kalachakra, as well as in the *Perfection of Wisdom* (under the names of different contemplations) and other sutras of definitive meaning. Since they manifest adventitiously in emptiness, they are “apparitions.” Since they pacify all forms of discursive thought, they are “inconceivable.” Since they are portents of the ultimate result, they are “signs.” They are “wisdom” in that they are the cognizance of emptiness, in nature free from apprehender and apprehended, the images appearing directly to the yogin. Being unpolluted by external or internal impurities, they are “equal to space.” They cannot be described as existent or non-existent since they transcend existence and non-existence. They lack inherent nature yet are comprehensive of all aspects, uncreated and sublime in being utterly devoid of a collection composed of subtle particles (Naropa’s *Commentary*, ff. 259b1-4).

- 34 The “sixteen parts of the dark side” (*nag po’i phyogs kyi cha bcu drug*) refers, in an outer sense, to the days of the waning phase of the moon; and, in an inner sense, to the sixteen dark moments of the vital essences that correspond to the sixteen days of the waning moon. As explained by Longdol Lama, sixteen kinds of vital essences are associated with the sixteen days of the waning moon. Specifically, three categories of five vital essences are associated with the waning moon, plus the completing aspect of the absence of the moon, a total of sixteen. Likewise, three categories of five vital essences are associated with the waxing moon, plus an aspect of abiding, a total of sixteen.

When the inner fire is made to blaze by means of an action seal (or imaginary seal) or the great seal, the vital essence descends from the top of the head to the hairline level, giving rise to five moments of joy, known as joy (*dga’ ba, nandā*); goodness (*bzang po, bhadrā*); victory (*rgyal ba, jayā*); emptiness (*stong pa, riktā*); and fullness (*rdzogs pa, pūrṇā*). As the vital essence descends from the hairline to the heart, the same five moments of joy occur. As it descends from the heart to the secret place, the five moments again occur. At the tip of the vajra, the vital essence gives rise to the innate bliss, distinct from the preceding five joys, in the sixteenth moment known as “full moon.” Those are the sixteen moments of joy in descending order.

When the vital essence is drawn back from the tip of the vajra to its center, the five movements of joy occur in a way similar to what was just described. As the vital essence moves from the center of the vajra to the navel, the same five movements of

joy occur; from the navel to the forehead, the five movements of joy occur again; from the forehead to the crown of the head, there arises innate bliss not distinct from the five preceding joys in the sixteenth moment, known as the absence of the moon (*naṣṭacandra*). Those are the sixteen joys in the ascending order. Those sixteen are known as “the sixteen compassions” (*snying rje bcu drug*), and the emptinesses of true existence, their objects, are known as “the sixteen emptinesses” (*stong pa nyid bcu drug*). More precisely, however, those are joys that block material phenomena and karmic winds (Longdol Lama’s *Kalachakra Tantra’s Sets of Terms According to Tsong-kapa’s Treatises*, p. 156).

Pundarika explains that the sixteen emptinesses represent the waning phase of the moon, wisdom, the sun; and the sixteen compassions, the waxing phase of the moon, method, the moon. Emptiness in this context is subdivided into three categories: emptiness (*stong pa nyid*), emptiness of the great (*chen po stong nyid*), and emptiness of the ultimate (*don dam pa stong pa nyid*). The first, emptiness, refers to the emptiness of the five aggregates, corresponding to the first five parts (i.e., days) of the waning moon. The second, emptiness of the great, refers to the emptiness of the five elements, corresponding to the second five parts (from the sixth to the tenth) of the waning moon. The third, emptiness of the ultimate, is the emptiness of the five sense powers, corresponding to the next five parts (the eleventh, etc.), with the day of the dark moon, the fifteenth, being the fifteenth emptiness. Between the end of the dark moon and the beginning of the first day of the waxing phase of the moon, there is the sixteenth, the all-emptiness (*thams cad stong pa nyid*) (Pundarika’s *Stainless Light*, Toh. 1347, vol. Tha, f. 123a3-b1).

- 35 The five immutable great emptinesses (*stong pa chen po ’gyur med lnga*), forms of great bliss, and the six immutable empty essences (*thig le stong pa ’gyur med drug*), forms of emptiness, are the unobscured aspect of all that can be included within the outer (*phyi*) world, inner (*nang*) body, and alternative level (*gzhan*) (the path and the result of the path); in other words, the three levels that comprise the Kalachakra tantra. The letters that symbolize the five and six form the *vam* and *é*, respectively. *Évam* is the symbol of the union of bliss and emptiness, the bodhichitta that is the reality of all things.

Pundarika explains that emptiness (*stong pa, śūnya*) in this context refers to the lack of obscuration, sameness of nature, and unification of the constituents (the aggregates, and so forth) included in the respective five emptinesses. It is not an absence of phenomena because they are directly perceived by the yogin (Pundarika’s *Stainless Light*, Toh. 1347, vol. Da, ff. 147b6-148a1). See also Kongtrul’s *Meaning of the Hevajra*, f. 48a5-6.

For a detailed discussion of these five emptinesses and six empty essences, see Kongtrul’s *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 188-194.

- 36 Two types of no-self (*bdag med gnyis*): the no-self of the person (*gang zag gi bdag med*) and the no-self of phenomena (*chos kyi bdag med*), understood through an analytical process and contemplated on the path of the sutra.

The distinction between the emptiness to be ascertained (*gtan la dbab par bya ba’i stong nyid*) and the emptiness that is contemplated on the path (*lam du bsgom par bya*

ba'i stong nyid) is made here based on the first being an object of intellectual knowledge, and the second, an object of personal experience.

- 37 Unconceived (or unimputed) emptiness (*ma brtags pa'i stong nyid*), as opposed to conceived emptiness, is an emptiness that is “seen” without prior conceptualization, volition, or examination as is done in the sutra system.
- 38 The four emptinesses are enumerated in the above citation from the *Indestructible Garland*: empty (*stong pa, śūnya*), very empty (*shin tu stong pa, atīśūnya*), great empty (*stong pa chen po, mahāśūnya*), and all-empty (*thams cad stong pa, sarvaśūnya*).
- 39 The ten emptinesses refer to the signs enumerated above in the citation from the *Primordial Buddha Kalachakra Tantra*.
- 40 *Brief Presentation of the [Kalachakra] Initiation* (Toh. 361), vol. Ka, f. 19b6. The universal image that is luminous clarity (*sna tshogs gzugs brnyan 'od gsal ba*) refers to the luminous-clarity image that contains everything in the universe. It first arises in the branch of withdrawal, the first of the six branches of yoga in the Kalachakra, following the manifestation of the ten signs, and is stabilized through the other branches. See above, Chapter 6, n. 33.
- 41 See above, Chapter 6, n. 35.
- 42 The three stages of experience of light (*snang ba gsum*): light (*snang ba, āloka*), increase of light (*snang ba mched pa, ālokābhāsa*), and culmination of light (*snang ba thob pa, ālokaupalabdha*). They are explained in terms of different contexts such as the ground and the path. During the path, they manifest as a result of the winds and vital essences being gathered in the central channel. When this occurs, the four empties arise in succession. In the cloudless sky manifests the light of the empty, which is like moonlight. Then manifests the increase of light of the very empty, which is like sunlight. Thereafter manifests the full culmination of the great empty, which is like the pervasive darkness of night. Then manifests luminous clarity, the universal empty or all-empty, which is like a perfectly clear sky at dawn, not vitiated by the influences of moonlight, sunlight, and darkness (*IOK*, vol. II, p. 271).

Concerning the nature of the three lights, Aryadeva explains that light is characterized by a nature that is devoid of any aspect of subject-object duality, the absence of body and speech. It is like a full moon that illuminates and pervades a cloudless autumn sky. As natural clarity, since it focuses on all things without exception, it is light. This is the ultimate awakening mind (*bodhichitta*), the light that pertains to pristine awareness, and the first empty (*stong pa*) (Aryadeva's *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice*, Toh. 1803, vol. Ngi, f. 77b3-4).

Increase of light, like light, is characterized by a nature devoid of any aspect of subject-object duality, the absence of body and speech. It is like an autumn sky pervaded by the light of the sun. As a very luminous and immaculate essence, such light focuses on all things without exception. This is the awakening mind called Ever Perfect, the second empty, the very empty (*shin tu stong pa*) (*ibid.*, f. 77b6-7).

The culmination of light is characterized as space, devoid of any entity, the absence of body and mind. Like the pervasive obscurity at midnight, it is subtle, omnipresent, and without self. It is devoid of the movement of winds and mental activity. This is ignorance, the great empty (*stong pa chen po*).

These three lights are known as the three consciousnesses (*ibid.*, f. 78a1-3).

- 43 See above, Chapter 6, n. 33.
- 44 See above, Chapter 6, n. 40.
- 45 Unchanging bliss (*mi 'gyur ba'i bde ba*). See the next section, entitled "Compassion."
- 46 This refers to magical images that are seen in a mirror during a divination rite called *pratisenavatarana*. Naropa explains that the term "magical image" (*pra phab, pratisena*) refers to an object that appears very clearly in a mirror or other medium while the mind of the diviner remains free from preconceptions or volition of any kind. What appears in the mirror is without any reality; in other words, it is not a reflection of anything substantial in the external world. Books on this rite explain that such images can appear on eight different supports, namely, a mirror, sword, thumb, lamp, the moon, the sun, water, the eyes. See Naropa's *Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation*, Toh. 1351, vol. Na, f. 262b4-5.
- 47 *Brief Presentation of the [Kalachakra] Initiation* (Toh. 361), vol. Ka, f. 20a1.
- 48 And in other highest yoga tantras as well.
- 49 Source of phenomena (*chos 'byung, dharmodaya*), or "source of attributes," means that from which originate all attributes devoid of inherent nature. The attributes devoid of inherent nature are the ten powers, the four fearlessnesses, and the other 84,000 aspects of the teachings. Their source, the *dharmodaya*, is the buddha realm, the abode of all buddhas and bodhisattvas, the place of bliss, the place of birth (Pundarika's *Stainless Light*, Toh. 1347, vol. Da, f. 237a3-5).
- 50 Central path (*dbu ma'i lam*): a reference to the path based on the centrist (*dbu ma, madhyamaka*) system founded by Nagarjuna. Here, it represents emptiness, through which the extreme of existence is overcome, and compassion, through which the extreme of peace is overcome. Emptiness and compassion are not two separate entities; thus, their union represents a higher form of centrism.
- 51 Strengths (*stobs, bala*) refers to the ten strengths of a buddha: the strengths of reflection, concentration, acquisition, wisdom, aspiration, method, conduct, emanation, awakening, and propagation of the teachings.
- 52 The fourth initiation (*dbang bzhi pa*) is the last in the most common format of the four-part initiation procedure in highest yoga tantras. This initiation introduces one to the union of bliss and emptiness of one's body in the aspect of the enjoyment dimension of awakening. See Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 232-233.
- 53 The term translated here as "awakened compassion" is *thugs rje*, the honorific form of the term *snying rje* or compassion.
- 54 Vitapada explains that the compassion of a beginner is focused solely on ending the suffering of all beings and the causes of suffering. The compassion of a bodhisattva, one who has reached a stage of realization (*sa, bhūmi*), is integrated with understanding the three worlds as the infinite expanse of reality. The notions of "sentient being," "ultimate," and so forth, do not apply to such compassion, and the idea of striving for

a goal is absent. The compassion of a buddha is completely without reference (*dmigs pa dang bral ba*), manifesting like clouds in the sky. This compassion of a transcendent being is called “great compassion” (Vitapada’s *Sevenfold Yoga*, Toh. 1875, vol. Pi, ff. 72a7-73a2).

- 55 Saraha’s *Treasury of Doha* (Toh. 2224), vol. Wi, f. 71b1.
- 56 The citation as found in the Dergé Tengyur reads *thar pa* in place of the *mya ngan ’das* as in *IOK*.
- 57 Action seal (*las kyi phyag rgya, karmamudrā*). See above, Chapter 5, n. 25; Kongtrul’s *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), p. 485, n. 1; and *Commentary on the Hevajra*, ff. 75b7-78a3.
- 58 “To offer everything” means to experience the bliss arising from relying on an action seal in a state of wisdom, i.e., knowing the illusory nature of things, and in a state of authentic method, i.e., without attachment.
- 59 In experiencing the bliss arising from relying on an actual seal, the point of reference is sentient beings of the phenomenal world. In experiencing the bliss from meditation on an imaginary seal, the point of reference is the illusory nature of phenomena or their lack of true existence. In experiencing the bliss from the knowledge of the nature of reality, there is no conceptual point of reference whatsoever in terms of the experienter, experienced, and object of experience (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).
- 60 Read *sbyar te* for *sbyor te*.
- 61 See explanation below, Chapter 8, section entitled “The Kalachakra Tantra Completion Phase.”
- 62 The ultimate dimension of phenomena (*chos dbyings, dharmadhatu*) here means the indissoluble nature of emptiness comprehensive of all aspects and unchanging great bliss, which, as mentioned before, are nominally called the first cause and the second result. See above, Chapter 6, n. 17.
- 63 The two last lines of this citation, with slightly different wording (*thabs dang shes rab bsnyoms ’jug pa/ rnal ’byor zhes ni bshad pa yin*), are found at f. 150a1 of the *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 443), while the first two lines that appear in *IOK* are not found in this text.
- 64 Read *’od gsal* for *’og gsal*.

CHAPTER 7: FATHER TANTRA SYSTEMS: GUHYASAMAJA, BLACK YAMARI, AND RED YAMARI

- 1 For a discussion of the Arya and Jnanapada traditions of the Guhyasamaja, see above, Chapter 3, section entitled “The System of Guhyasamaja.”
- 2 *Guhyasamaja Root Tantra* (Toh. 442), vol. Ca, f. 98b6-7. The Dergé Kangyur edition reads: *sngags dmigs pa yi lus kyis ni/ ngag dang yid la skul byas pas/ sgrub bya rab mchog dngos grub dang/ yid ni yang dag dga’ mdzes pa*.

- 3 The stages of body isolation (*lus dben*), voice isolation (*ngag dben*), mind isolation (*sems dben*), and self-consecration (*bdag byin brlabs*) are treated below in this chapter.
- 4 Chandrakirti's *Illuminating Lamp: Large Commentary* [on the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*] (Toh. 1785). This discussion has not been located in this work.
- 5 Aryadeva's *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice* (Toh. 1803), vol. Ngi.
- 6 *Indestructible Garland* (Toh. 445), vol. Ca, Chapter 68, ff. 274b6-275a1.
- 7 Eight powers (*ngos grub brgyad*). See above, Chapter 4, n. 10.
- 8 As to the meanings of the names of these five stages, Lakshmi provides a succinct yet clear explanation: "Vajra recitation" (*rdo rje'i bzlas pa, vajrajāpa*) refers to mental recitation performed simply by relying on the mandalas of the winds, which are indestructible like vajras.
 "Mind" (in the phrase "isolation of mind") refers to the three consciousnesses (i.e., light, increase of light, and culmination of light). The purification of mind, that is, the realization of natural awareness, which comes from the stopping of the one hundred and sixty natures (i.e., conceptions), is what is meant by "focus on mind" (*sems la dmigs pa, cittāmbhāna*).
 "Consecration" (in "self-consecration") refers to the consecrative power that comes from the luminous-clarity nature of all phenomena. That consecration understood as being of the nature of illusion is what is meant by self-consecration (*bdag byin rlabs pa, svadhiṣṭhāna*). Alternatively, "self" means the form of Vajradhara, etc.; and "consecration" means applying to it the examples of illusion, and so forth.
 "Actual" (in "actual awakening," the stage of luminous clarity) means the actual seeing of the truth, which is awakening itself. This attainment of the state of a buddha is the stage of "actual awakening" (*mngon par byang chub pa, abhisambodhi*).
 "The two" (*zung*) (in the term "union of the two truths") means that which has the nature of the relative and ultimate truths. The "uniting" or "merging" (*jug pa*) means becoming of one flavor. The two becoming of one flavor is the essence of the phase of union (*zung jug, yuganaddha*). See Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages* (Toh. 1842), vol. Chi, f. 88a3-8.
- 9 Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802), vol. Ngi, f. 45a7-b2.
- 10 Concerning the "true limit" (*yang dag mtha'*), Lakshmi explains that "true" (*yang dag pa*) means the truth that is ultimate because it is final. The nature of the "true limit" is the essential reality of luminous clarity (Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, f. 205a4).
- 11 "Gradually, by means of the principle of winds," line one of the first verse, means that one first realizes the particular relationship that exists between consciousness, as the rider, and wind, as the mount, and understands the various types of winds. These are said to be ten, five main and five secondary. The five main winds are the following: the life wind (*srog 'dzin rlung, prāṇa*), located at the heart; the downward-voiding (*thur sel, apāna*) wind, located at the secret place; the fire-accompanying (*me mnyam gnas, samāna*) wind, located at the navel; the ascending (*gyen rgyu, udāna*) wind, located at the throat; and the pervading (*khyab byed, vyāna*) wind, which flows throughout

the whole body. The secondary winds related to the sense powers of the eyes, and so on, are the serpent (*klu*, *nāga*) wind, which reveals forms through the eyes; the tortoise (*rus sbal*, *kürma*) wind, sounds through the ears; the lizard (*rtsangs pa*, *krkara*) wind, odors through the nose; the gift-of-the-gods (*lhas sbyin*, *devadatta*) wind, tastes through the tongue; the victorious-in-wealth (*nor las rgyal*, *dhanañjaya*) wind, tangible objects through the body. Without knowledge of the principle of winds, one would be unable to fathom the principle of mantra.

In line two, “mantra” (*sngags*) refers to the three syllables, *om*, *ah*, and *hum*. Knowing these syllables to be the nature of one breath being drawn in (*jug pa*), pausing (*gnas pa*), and issuing forth (*ldang ba*), one regards the breath as mantra. With that understanding, one can properly train in vajra recitation (*rdō rje'i bzlas pa*).

As stated in verse two, the yogin “abiding in the practice of vajra recitation” will attain the stage of focus on the mind (*sems la dmigs pa*).

In the third verse, “abiding in the illusion-like contemplation” refers to the contemplation of the illusory body of the deity, born from the knowledge that body, speech, and mind are not inherently existent. Such contemplation has the characteristic of self-consecration (*bdag byin rlabs*). “He will gain mastery through the true limit (*yang dag mtha'*)” means that one will attain the stage of luminous clarity (*'od gsal*), which is also known as the stage of actual awakening, when one focuses solely on the ultimate nature of things.

In the fourth verse, “When he has emerged from that true limit, he will attain non-dual pristine awareness” indicates that from the state of luminous clarity, one arises as an emanation, attaining the state of nondual pristine awareness.

In the fifth verse, “abiding in the contemplation of union, he will have nothing more to learn” means that the yogin dwells in the contemplation of a perfectly awake mind and that no further training is needed.

See Munishribhadra's *Brief Explanation of the Five Stages: Enchanting the Yogin's Mind* (Toh. 1813), vol. Ngī, ff. 168b6-170a2.

- 12 The five essential principles (*de nyid*) as taught in Aryadeva's *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice* (Toh. 1803, vol. Ngī, f. 57b4) are the following; the essential principle of mantra (*sngags*), which corresponds to voice isolation (*ngag dben*); that of seal (*phyag rgya*), corresponding to mind isolation (*sems dben*); that of self (*bdag*), corresponding to illusory body (*sgyu lus*); that of phenomena (*chos*), corresponding to luminous clarity (*'od gsal*); and that of deity (*lha*), corresponding to union (*zung jug*).
- 13 There are a number of different perspectives on how the phase of completion can be divided into the causal completion phase (*rgyu'i rdzogs rim*) and resultant completion phase (*bras bu'i rdzogs rim*). In the Guhyasamaja system, body, voice, and mind isolations are generally considered as the cause; luminous clarity and self-consecration, the two stages mainly to be trained in; and union, the resultant phase of completion. Here, however, mind isolation is taken as the real causal completion phase. See Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages* (Toh. 1842), vol. Chi, f. 192a7.
- 14 Chandrakirti's *Illuminating Lamp* (Toh. 1785), vol. Ha, f. 1a3-4.
- 15 The reference here is to Abhayakaragupta's *Commentary on the Five Stages: Moonlight* (Toh. 1831), vol. Ci.

- 16 The reference here is to Munishribhadra's *Brief Explanation of the Five Stages: Enchanting the Yogin's Mind* (Toh. 1813), vol. Ngi.
- 17 The six stages here would be body isolation, voice isolation, mind isolation, illusory body, luminous clarity, and union, as explained in Chandrakirti's *Illuminating Lamp* (Toh. 1785). See below, Chapter 7, section entitled "The Arya [Nagarjuna] Tradition."
- 18 This refers to a state of mental quiescence attained on the basis of creation-phase meditation (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).
- 19 For these branches, see above, Chapter 3, section entitled "The Branches of Visualization Sequences."
- 20 The yoga of single recollection (*dran pa gcig pa'i rnal 'byor*), also known as the yoga of one great secret family (*gsang chen rigs gcig gi rnal 'byor*), refers to a simplified form of deity yoga based only on the visualization of the deity and consort without mandala and retinue. It is intended for those who are not capable of elaborate visualization. It corresponds to the body-isolation stage for the single sealed procedure of one great secret family (see next note). This practice is considered inferior when compared to the elaborate visualizations of the single sealed procedure of one hundred families, and so forth (Jamyang Kyentsé Wangpo's *Key to the Five Stages of the Guhyasamaja Completion Phase*, f. 9b5-7).

Single recollection denotes the process of familiarization or cultivation to the point of achieving stable clarity of visualization of the single deity on whose insignia one's flower has fallen (during the initiation) or the main deity of the mandala. The conceptual yoga is practiced subsequent to the single recollection and refers to the familiarization or cultivation to the point of achieving stable clarity of visualization of the entire mandala of deities, while performing recitation of the mantras of those deities until one has fulfilled the specified time, numbers, or signs (Kongtrul's *Manual for the Performance of Retreat on the Tantras of the Marpa Tradition*, f. 2a4).

- 21 At the stage of body isolation, every constituent of one's psychophysical being, as well as the outer universe, is meditated upon in its purified aspect of the deity. The four aspects listed here are the four aspects of the body isolation of contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin gyi lus dben*). To explain, all of the one hundred families at the time of the ground are the one hundred families whose deities are visualized at the time of the path. As a consequence, the one hundred families at the time of the result are realized, that is, are accomplished on the basis of the principle of the indivisibility of ground, path, and result.

Lakshmi explains that each of the five aggregates comprises the natures of the five buddhas, thus forming twenty-five families. Each of the four elements is subdivided into five, forming twenty families. The ten sense fields (five sense powers and five objects) are each subdivided into five, forming fifty families. Added to those are the five families representing the five pristine awarenesses, mirror-like pristine awareness, and so on. In total, there are one hundred families (*Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, f. 198a5-6). These are the families referred to in the expression "single sealed procedure of one hundred families" (*rgyas btab rim pa gcig pa rigs*

brgya). That procedure entails the visualization of all the deities of the one hundred families.

When one is unable to perform that procedure, one visualizes all those deities as the five buddhas, or other forms. All of one's psychophysical constituents can be grouped into five families: the transcendent family, jewel family, lotus family, action family, and vajra family. These are the families referred to in the procedure of five families (*rigs lnga*).

The five families can be further condensed into three families by including Ratnasambhava in the vajra-body family of Vairocana; Amoghasiddhi in the vajra-speech family of Amitabha; and the sixth buddha, Vajradhara, in the vajra-mind family of Akshobhya. These are the families referred to in the procedure of the three families (*rigs gsum*).

The three families, when considered to be the indivisibility of the three vajras, form the single great secret family of the vajra body of the sixth buddha, Vajradhara. This is the family referred to in the procedure of one great secret family (*gsang chen rigs gcig*). In this procedure, one takes refuge and imagines that one's master (who has been visualized in order to cultivate positive potential) is absorbed into oneself. From luminous clarity, the indivisibility of oneself and one's master, one emerges as blue Akshobhya, three-faced and six-armed, in union with consort, who is the indivisibility of appearance and emptiness. One understands that everything is simply arising from one's own mind, and one regards all mind's manifestations—the universe and all beings—as Akshobhya. In addition, one meditates on the distinct forms of the arms of the deity, and so on. See Aryadeva's *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice* (Toh. 1803), vol. Ngī, ff. 60b6-66b7; Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages* (Toh. 1842), f. 198a5-6; and Jamyang Kyentsé Wangpo's *Key to the Five Stages of the Guhyasamaja Completion Phase*, f. 9a5-10a4.

22. Aryadeva describes the characteristics (*mtshan nyid*) or the principle (*de kho na nyid*) of the winds in this way: What is called "mind isolation" is the principle of mantra, which cannot be known in isolation from the principle of winds, the breathing in (*srog, prāṇa*) and breathing out (*rtsol ba, āyāma*). The words in the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* used to indicate the principle of winds are the following:

Always contemplate at the tip of the nose
A precious [insignia], one of five colors,
No larger in size than a mustard grain.

Aryadeva explains that by differentiating between the definitive and provisional meanings, these words of the tantra pertain to two forms of contemplation. One is that of the phase of creation in which, in order to stabilize one's mind, one visualizes the insignia of the deity, the size of a mustard seed. The other is that of the phase of completion, namely, the vajra recitation in which the three syllables (*om, ah, and hum*) are synchronized with breathing in, pausing, and breathing out, while imagining that the winds associated with the four elements exit from the nostrils as lights of their respective colors. Both these yogas of the creation phase and completion phase are termed subtle yoga (*phra mo'i rnal 'byor, sūkṣma yoga*) (a summary of Aryadeva's *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice*, Toh. 1803, vol. Ngī, ff. 67b1-68b1). See also Kong-

trul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), p. 496, n. 20.

Differentiation of the winds as principal and secondary yields ten winds. The five principal winds are described as follows: the life wind resides at the heart and is the transcendent Akshobhya; the downward-voiding wind resides at the secret place and is the transcendent Ratnasambhava; the ascending wind resides at the throat and is the transcendent Amitabha; the fire-accompanying wind resides at the navel and is the transcendent Amoghasiddhi; and the pervading wind resides in all the joints and is the transcendent Vairochana. The secondary winds, in some sources referred to as serpent wind, and so forth, are enumerated in Aryadeva's *Lamp Summary* as the moving (*rgyu ba*) wind, related to form; moving thoroughly (*rnam par rgyu ba*), sound; moving perfectly (*yang dag par rgyu ba*), odor; moving intensely (*rab tu rgyu ba*), taste; and moving resolutely (*nges par rgyu ba*), touch.

These ten winds instigate exhalation and inhalation. They are of the natures of the four mandalas of the elements, wind, and so forth, and of the four goddesses. They also are the five elements, the five pristine awarenesses (the mirror-like, etc.), the five-colored lights (the white light, etc.), and the five transcendent ones. They form the bases of the three syllables (*om*, *ah*, and *hum*) and act as the agents of vajra recitation though the steps of breathing in, pausing, and breathing out. Since these winds are the basis of the syllable *a*, they produce all speech. Once the indestructible state is attained, they dissolve.

As to the way in which the winds flow through the nose, Aryadeva explains that the fire-accompanying wind, which issues forth from the left nostril as black light, is the yellowish-green mandala of wind. The ascending wind, which issues forth from the right nostril as red light, is the red mandala of fire. The downward-voiding wind, which issues forth from both nostrils as yellow light, is the yellow mandala of earth. The life wind, which issues forth slowly from the nostrils as white light, is the clear mandala of water. The pervading wind, which permeates all the mandalas of the elements but does not issue forth, is the mandala of space. The three syllables (the "lords of mantras") should be synchronized with the three phases of breathing, accompanied by the flowing of the winds associated with the four elements. This is what is meant by the principle of winds (a summary of Aryadeva's *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice*, Toh. 1803, vol. Ngi, ff. 68b1-69b7).

In this context, the word *pranayama* (*srog rtsol*) does not mean to restrain or control the wind. Instead, *prana* means breathing in; and *ayama*, breathing out.

- 23 Concerning the definitive meaning of mantras (*sngags kyi nges don*), Lakshmi explains that the principle of mantra (*sngags kyi de kho na nyid*) means the four aspects of mantras, namely, the meanings (*don*), the symbols (*brdar gyur*), the derivations (*btub*), and the essential nature (*de kho na nyid*).

A meaning of a mantra is, for example, the syllable *om* (called "the homage"), representing Vairochana, or another deity.

The symbols are of numerous types: serpent (*sbrul ba*) mantras, which include both *om* and *svaha*, or are without the "head" (without *om* but with *svaha*), without ending (without *svaha* but with *om*), or without either; essence (*snying*) mantras, representing the Buddha's expressions of particular meanings (for example, *om vajra drihika ah hum svaha*); the real essence (*nye ba'i snying*) mantras, unified or condensed expres-

sions (for example, *om ah vam hum*); the activator of essence (*snying po bskul ba*) mantras (for example, *om ah hum*); retention (*gzungs*) mantras (for example, *nama samanta kaya vak citta vajra ni*); awareness (*rig*) mantras (for example, *om tare*); seed (*sa bon*) mantras, syllables that serve as the basis for visualizing the deity, syllables of attributes, or the first syllable of the name of a buddha, goddess, bodhisattva, or wrathful deity; garland (*phreng ba*) mantras, which serve as the basis for accomplishing various magical feats (for example, *om chindha chindha*); and inverted mantras, which accomplish magical feats that other mantras could not accomplish (for example, *ba sva hum ah drihika vajra om*).

The derivations refer to the mantras of countless male and female messengers, and so forth, of peaceful and wrathful deities.

The essential nature of mantra is symbolized by the first vowel, the *a*, which represents authentic luminous clarity alone. See Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages* (Toh. 1842), vol. Chi, ff. 190a1-6; 200b1-202a1; 215a1-218b7. Moreover, mantra has two aspects when distinguished in terms of cause and effect. The cause is wind (*prāṇa*); the effect, the mantra (Lakshmi, f. 222a3). See also Abhayakaragupta's *Commentary on the Five Stages: Moonlight* (Toh. 1831), vol. Ci, ff. 186a4-190b4.

- 24 Voice isolation has three aspects: one, the wind-yoga meditation on the vital-essence sphere of mantra (*sngags kyi thig le*) at the nose-tip of the heart (*snying ga'i sna rtse*); two, the wind-yoga meditation on the vital-essence sphere of light (*'od kyi thig le*) at the nose-tip of the face (*gdong gi sna rtse*); and three, the wind-yoga meditation on the vital-essence sphere of substance (*rdzas kyi thig le*) at the nose-tip of the secret place (*gsang ba'i sna rtse*). The nose-tip of the heart means the center of the eight-petalled channel-wheel of the heart. The nose-tip of the face means the point between the eyebrows (or the nostrils of the nose). The nose-tip of the secret place means the lower extremity of the central channel of the male deity and the female deity. These are known as the "three nose-tips" (*sna rtse gsum*).

The first aspect, the wind-yoga meditation on the vital-essence sphere of mantra, is twofold: the five stages with a circle of mantra; and without a circle.

For the practice with a circle of mantra, one imagines oneself as a deity. The heart channel-wheel is visualized as a red lotus with three layers of petals—an outer, a middle, and an inner. On the petals are arranged the vowels, white in color, symbolizing the pristine awareness of the light, and the consonants, red, symbolizing the pristine awareness of increase of light. At the center of the lotus is a subtle white-and-red vital-essence sphere. At the center of that sphere is an *a*-stroke with half moon, sphere, and *nada*. One develops the clarity of this visualization from the outer to the inner petals. Then, one focuses on the *a*-stroke and imagines that the inner fire blazes from the *a*-stroke and, as a result, in four stages, the winds and vital essences gather from the extremities of the body to just outside the outer set of petals, or "limit of the outer rim." During that process, there arise the four signs, mirage and so on. When the winds and the vital essences reach the outer petals, there arises the white light. When they reach the middle set of petals, there arises the red increase of light. When they reach the inner petals, there arises the black culmination of light. Then, they dissolve into the half moon and sphere, eliciting the four joys. With the arising of the innate joy, one remains in contemplation of luminous clarity. One then applies the nine integrations or "mixings." In the post-meditation period, whatever appears is experienced as empty. Emptiness is experienced as bliss, and bliss arises as the body of the deity.

For the practice without circle, one imagines that at the center of the heart channel-wheel of oneself as the deity is an indestructible vital-essence sphere (*mi shigs pa'i thig le*), red and white, within which is an *a*-stroke, with a half moon, sphere, and *nada* on top. Focusing on that sphere, as was done previously, causes the winds and vital essences to enter, abide, and dissolve into the half moon, sphere, and *nada*. Then, one remains in luminous clarity as before and practices the nine mixings, and so forth.

Those are the two methods of the sphere of mantra, which bring about the release of the knots of the heart channel-wheel. The first includes the mantra circle at the heart; the second, only the *a*-stroke at the heart.

For the wind-yoga meditation on the vital-essence sphere of light at the nose-tip of the face, one imagines that at the center of the heart channel-wheel of oneself as the deity, on a sun disk, is the form of an *a*-stroke, together with half moon, sphere, and *nada* on top, which represents one's own subtle winds and mind. From the *nada* arises a white light resembling a long tail of incense smoke. With that as support, the life-sustaining wind and the ascending wind rise to just below the throat. The winds are then exhaled. Next, they are inhaled and imagined to dissolve into the focus at the heart channel-wheel. Then, the winds pause. Each phase of this sequence is accompanied by the sound of one of three syllables. This is not a verbal or mental recitation but is like hearing the rhythm of the breath as the sound of the three syllables. One also applies the vajra recitation associated with the four principal winds, the recitation associated with the winds of the five senses, and the recitation to gather all the winds of the body at the heart. One may also apply the vajra recitation of the life wind and downward-voiding wind. Since the light from the focus at the heart (*a*-stroke, etc.), joined with the lights of the winds, reaches the tip of the nose, the term "vital-essence sphere of light" is used in tantras.

For the wind-yoga meditation on the vital-essence sphere of substance at the nose-tip of the secret place, one imagines oneself as Akshobhya (Guhyasamaja), embracing the consort. The act of union causes the inner fire to blaze. As a result of that, the vital essences of the male and female deities, very tiny in size, unite and produce the experience of great bliss. One remains in the contemplation of the union of bliss and emptiness. Here, "vital-essence sphere of substance" refers to the union of red and white vital essences.

The vital-essence spheres associated with the three nose-tips are round and therefore devoid of corners. That spherical shape symbolizes the overcoming, by means of these sphere meditations, of adherence to reality and the imprints of karma, which are sharp like corners (a summary of Sherab Gyatso's *Memorandum of Direct Instructions on the Five Stages of the Completion Phase of Guhyasamaja: The Nectar of Akshobhya's Oral Teaching*, ff. 26b4-31b6).

Lakshmi explains that an aspect of the phase of voice isolation, or vajra recitation, is the principle of winds. Through the force of great bliss, the wind of the breath manifests in the form of a sphere. That sphere becomes three, held at the nose-tips of the secret place, the heart, and the ordinary nose. The sphere at the secret place is of the nature of vital essence; the one at the heart, mantra (i.e., syllables); and the one at the nose, light. These are focuses of meditation intended to draw to the practice persons with great desire, aversion, and delusion, respectively. See Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages* (Toh. 1842), vol. Chi, f. 189a5-b1.

There is a wide variety of instructions on voice isolation found in the tradition of the Guhyasamaja completion phase.

- 25 The vajra recitation of the four lords (*mgon po bzhi'i rdor bzlas*) is associated with the four winds of the four elements and the buddhas. This does not include the pervading wind, which does not flow outside. See next note.
- 26 Generally speaking, vajra recitation (*rdō rje'i bzlas pa, vajrajāpa*) is done in conjunction with the three syllables, *om*, *ah*, and *hum*, known as the “lords of mantras” (*mantraraja*). Here, the first syllable is synchronized with the entrance of breath; the second, the breath being held within; and the third, the out-breath. *Ah* is wisdom; *hum*, method; and *om*, the basis of both. Their “recitation” here does not mean uttering or mentally reciting the three syllables but means breathing while being aware of the rhythm of the breath as the sound of the three syllables.

In a sense, vajra recitation is always occurring since one is always breathing in and out. As long as the nature of this process has not been recognized, one is reciting the lords of mantras in ignorance, giving rise to negative emotions. In order to be distinguished from the breathing of an ordinary person, the vajra recitation synchronized with the three phases of breathing in, pausing, and breathing out, called “indicative” (*mtshon byed*), should be accompanied by the visualization of luminous clarity, the “indicated” (*mtshon bya*), as the colored lights of the breath leaving the nostrils. Thus, each instant of breath is pervaded by an instant of luminous clarity. See Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, ff. 217a7; 219a2.

Butön explains that the ten winds emerge as light through the nose-tip of the vajra of the male and lotus of the female and flow upwards. From the nose-tip of the face, the winds of the mandalas of the four elements issue forth as lights: from the left nostril the mandala of the green-black wind of wind, the nature of Amoghasiddhi, flows nine hundred times. From the right nostril, the red wind of the fire element, the nature of Amitabha, flows nine hundred times. From both nostrils flows the yellow wind of earth, the nature of Ratnasambhava, nine hundred times. The white wind of water, a quiet wind whose flow is slow, the nature of Akshobhya, flows nine hundred times. The pervading wind of the space element, the nature of Vairocana, pervades all four mandalas but does not issue forth during one's life. At the time of death it flows nine hundred times. The winds of the first four elements are the winds of the four lords (*mgon po bzhi'i rdor bzlas*), the four lords being Amoghasiddhi, Amitabha, Ratnasambhava, and Akshobhya.

In the flow of the wind of each lord, there flow the winds of the four goddesses, Pandara, Tara, Lochana, and Mamaki (*lba mo bzhi'i rlung*), two hundred and twenty-five times each, and each mandala exists as inhalation, pause, and exhalation, known as the lords of the three syllables. That is the principle of winds (*rlung gi de kho na nyid*). The arising of the three syllables from the indestructible nature of all mantras, such as the serpent mantra (*om sva ha*) which emanates from the vowels and consonants, is the principle of mantra (*sngags gi de kho na nyid*) (Butön's *Instruction Manual on the Five Stages*, f. 7a5-b2).

Jamyang Kyentsé Wangpo explains that in the body of an ordinary person who is healthy and whose elements are youthful, vital, and balanced, the winds flow 21,600 times a day. The wind of earth flows downward from the navel to the tip of the vajra or lotus and then turns upward and enters the lower extremities of the right and left channels. Then, it flows from both nostrils in equal strength nine hundred times. This is the wind of Lord Ratnasambhava. Similarly, the wind of fire, Lord Amitabha, flows

from the throat; the wind of water, Lord Akshobhya, from the heart; and the wind of wind, Lord Amoghasiddhi, from the secret place, all flowing down to the tip of the vajra and then rising through the right and left channels. The wind of fire issues from the right nostril; the wind of water, from both nostrils; and the wind of wind, from the left nostril. All flow nine hundred times. The pervading wind of space pervades all four other winds in the form of luminosity or light (according to most tantras such as this one, Guhyasamaja, but not according to the Kalachakra system). While one is alive it does not flow. At death the wind of space flows nine hundred times. The point at which that flow has subdued all other winds is what is called “death.”

Each of the winds of the four lords can be differentiated on the basis of the winds of the different elements. There is, for example, the wind of earth of the wind of water, which flows two hundred and twenty-five times, a total of nine hundred for the four. These are called the winds of the goddesses (*lha mo'i rlung*) (a summary of Jamyang Kyentsé Wangpo's *Key to the Five Stages of the Guhyasamaja Completion Phase*, f. 11a1-6). See also Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages* (Toh. 1842), vol. Chi, ff. 210a2-b7, 219a1-6; Wayman's *The Yoga of the Guhyasamajatantra*, pp. 219-220.

The secret vajra recitation of the secondary winds (*gsang ba yan lag gi rlung gi rdor bzlas*) involve the five secondary winds, the lizard, and so forth. See above Chapter 7, n. 11.

- 27 This is the stage at which, in order to understand the essential nature of mind, or luminous clarity, one trains in the three consciousnesses (*rnam shes gsum*), or three stages of light (*snang ba gsum*). This is done through control of the winds or by relying on a seal. For an explanation of the three lights or consciousnesses and their attendant conceptions, see Aryadeva's *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice* (Toh. 1803), vol. Ngi, ff. 76b7-80b7. See also Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 260-266.

Lakshmi explains that the stage of mind isolation, or focus on the mind, comprises two methods: the stage of mantra; and the stage of mudra.

The stage of mantra involves the visualization of the three syllables, *om*, *ah*, and *hum*, at the head, throat, and heart, and their dissolution, with the ensuing experiences of the three lights and the ceasing of the conceptions (Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, ff. 190a6-b5; 228a4-6; 229a2-6).

As for the stage of mudra, at the time of integrating method and wisdom (i.e., at the time of union with a seal), when vital essence flows from the area of the brahminical aperture (*tshangs pa'i bu ga*), there manifests the pristine awareness of light. The sensory consciousnesses and their attendant conceptions cease. When vital essence penetrates the various parts of the body, up to the joints of the limbs, the pristine awareness of the increase of light manifests, and the polluted mind and all its attendant conceptions cease. When the vital essence reaches the tip of the vajra, the pristine awareness of the full culmination of light manifests, and the ground-of-all consciousness and its attendant conceptions cease. When the vital essence is fixed at the tip of the vajra, not flowing into the lotus of the seal, the pristine awareness of luminous clarity manifests, and the preceding three pristine awarenesses cease. This is the stage of mudra (Lakshmi, f. 190b7-191a3).

Moreover, the pristine awarenesses of light and the other stages are called, respec-

tively, empty, subsequent empty, great empty, and all-empty. These manifest on the basis of a cause-effect relationship, the first three being causes, and the fourth, the effect. This means that they arise in a dependent manner and are therefore empty of inherent existence. Therefore, light, etc., are termed empty, and so forth. See Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, f. 226b6-7.

There are, however, various systems of meditation related to the stage of mind isolation found in the Tibetan tradition of the Guhyasamaja.

- 28 A distinction is made here between the practice (*sgrub pa*) of mind isolation and the stages of realization (*sa*) attained in the actual (*dnogs*) mind isolation.
- 29 The final-example luminous clarity (*mtshar thug dpe'i 'od gsal*) is the luminous clarity that precedes the attainment of the illusory body as opposed to the true luminous clarity (*don gyi 'od gsal*), which precedes the attainment of the state of union. It is called final because it represents the furthest limit one can reach in that stage.
- 30 Lakshmi presents the stage of the illusory body (*sgyu ma'i lus, māyā deha*), also called the stage of self-consecration (*bdag la byin rlabs, svadhiṣṭhāna*), in two methods: the instantaneous stage (*cig car gyi rim pa*); and the full culmination of light (*snang ba nye bar thob pa*).

The instantaneous stage refers to the instantaneous arising from luminous clarity as the illusory body, like the flash of a fish as it springs from water, in order to accomplish the welfare of beings. The nature of this stage is that of the revelation of the teachings through the illusion-like body of great Vajradhara.

In the second method, one first experiences sky-like luminous clarity; then, one focuses on a vision of light like twilight; then, on a vision like sunlight; and then, on a vision like moonlight, at which point these lights merge. One manifests as the form of Great Vajradhara, or another form. Those are the stages of the full culmination of light, and so forth. The form of the deity is to be understood as the basis on which the examples of illusion, and so forth, are initially made (Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, f. 191a4-7).

Lakshmi further explains that when the three lights merge, there arises the body of the deity endowed with the supreme of all aspects. This body, illustrated by the twelve examples of illusion, is that of mind nature. Until fully awakened, the yogin, by means of this illusory body, can act for the benefit of others and apply the necessary enhancement practices. To eliminate the risk of the yogin's conceiving of awakening as simply the illusory body itself, and since the contemplation of the illusory body pertains exclusively to the relative, the illusory body is to be purified by the unshakeable contemplation of the essential reality of natural luminous clarity (ff. 204a3-205a4).

- 31 Butön explains that, for the stage of the illusory body, or self-consecration, one must understand that everything in the three realms is of the nature of Great Vajradhara, the body of illusion. Otherwise, by apprehending things as real, not knowing them to be illusory in nature, one wanders in cyclic existence. Therefore, what is to be forsaken at this stage is the apprehension of things as real. There are two instructions for the practice. The first concerns illusion in the state of equipoise (*mnyam bzhag sgyu ma*); and the second, illusion in post-equipoise (*rje thob sgyu ma*).

For the first, in a solitary place, one sits motionless in the lotus or half-lotus position with straight back, the eyes half open, focused in space directly in front of one-

self, the breath moving normally. One remains in a state wherein one neither generates thoughts nor cuts their flow. One does not fixate on notions of existence or non-existence, emptiness or non-emptiness, and so forth, but meditates without focusing on any object, in a luminous state that does not adhere to anything. Free from both the coarse and subliminal processes of thinking, one counteracts the obstacles of sleep and foginess by means of the eye-focus, and so forth.

When one remains in that way, the winds come under control, and gradually there arise the signs of the elements dissolving into each other (such as smoke indicating earth dissolving into water). Then, when mind dissolves into mental events, there arises a vision like moonlight; when mind dissolves into ignorance, a vision like sunlight; when ignorance dissolves into the great empty, a vision like the black light of Rahu. After that, one experiences light as in a cloudless sky. Next, the three lights appear in reverse order: from the all-empty arise mental events; from mental events arises mind; then, the three consciousnesses together with the winds manifest as the illusory body, as illustrated by the twelve examples of illusion. That body is endowed with all the marks of enlightenment, with face, arms, and so on, appearing like a reflection in a mirror. That is illusion in the state of equipoise.

As for the post-equipoise illusion, there are three parts: the illusion of appearances; the illusion of dreams; and the illusion of the intermediate state.

For the first, having gained experience in equipoise, one then regards all things that appear in the waking state as the manifestations of meditation. All forms, and so forth, good and bad, as well as the eight mundane concerns, are meditated upon as being of one flavor, illusory in nature, neither to be accepted nor rejected.

For the second, the illusion of dreams, there are three aspects: grasping dreams, training in dreams, and integrating the practice with other states. To accomplish the first, throughout the day one must maintain a continuous awareness of all things as being like illusions; and at night, recognize dreams as illusions by applying the appropriate instructions. Training means to transform dreams; for example, to multiply the images of the dream, turn the images into others, or engage with them in various ways, thereby recognizing dreams as the appearances of one's mind and one's mind as empty. Integrating means that one integrates dreams with luminous clarity by dissolving the dream into luminous clarity, and one integrates dreams with the intermediate state by recognizing the illusory nature of dream so that one will be able to recognize the illusory nature of intermediate state.

For the third, the illusion of the intermediate state, there are the three aspects of recognition, training, and integration. Recognition means to understand that all appearances in the waking state are of the same nature as the appearances of the intermediate state. The training means to know the signs that accompany death and the way to enter luminous clarity. For someone incapable of that, training means to become free of attachment and aversion regarding one's place of birth, to direct one's rebirth into a pure buddha realm or other favorable place, to visualize the place of birth as a mandala and oneself as the deity, or, if incapable of that, to practice transference of consciousness. Integration refers to integrating the intermediate-state practice with dream and luminous clarity (a summary of Butön's *Instruction Manual on the Five Stages*, ff. 10a6-18a6).

- 32 The newly attained (*thob ma thag pa*) illusory body refers to the initial illusory body,

which manifests at this stage as one arises from the contemplative equipoise of the final-example luminous clarity of the mind-isolation stage. The final (*mtshar thug pa*) illusory body is the body of union, that is, the enjoyment dimension of awakening or vajra body. The illusory body in progress (*gong du 'phel bzhin pa*), or interim body, refers to the various stages between the first and the third illusory body.

- 33 According to Lakshmi, in the stage of luminous clarity, or “actual awakening,” there are two methods: the seal (*phyag rgya, mudrā*); and the contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin, samādhi*).

The seal practice consists of an outer actual awakening and an inner actual awakening. The outer actual awakening is enacted through the pledge seal (*dam tshig gi phyag rgya, samayamudrā*) or outer seal (a real consort); and the inner, solely through the pristine-awareness seal (*ye shes kyi phyag rgya, jñānamudrā*), an imaginary consort. According to another explanation, in the outer awakening, the night serves as an illustration for the pristine awareness of light; the day, the pristine awareness of the increase of light; the twilight in the evening, the pristine awareness of the full culmination of light; and the daybreak, the pristine awareness of luminous clarity. Moreover, the outer actual awakening is characterized by five indicative signs, which resemble a mirage, smoke, fireflies, the flame of a lamp, and a cloudless sky; the inner actual awakening is characterized by one's own self-knowing awareness.

The practice of contemplation consists of the meditative absorption of total apprehension (*ril por 'dzin pa, piṇḍagraha*) and the meditative absorption of successive destruction (*rjes su gzhig pa, anuvināṣa*). For the meditative absorption of total apprehension, at the center of the navel is imagined the first vowel *a*. Light emanating from the vowel pervades one's body up to the head; from there, to the heart; and from there, to the feet. Then, from there, light emanates in the same way, causing the body to dissolve into emptiness. For the second method, successive destruction, by means of light emanating the universe is made to dissolve, and then oneself also dissolves.

Buddha Vajradhara taught that the stage of practice with a seal is intended for persons with strong desire, while the stage of contemplation is meant for persons with strong aversion. Those with a mixture of desire and aversion should apply both methods alternately (a summary of Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, ff. 191a7-b5; 261b4-5).

For the meditative absorption of total apprehension and that of successive destruction, see Chapter 12, section entitled “Meditation on Luminous Clarity.” See also next note.

- 34 The illusory body becomes purified when made to dissolve into luminous clarity through the sequence of outer or inner awakenings, or by relying on the meditative absorption of total apprehension or that of successive destruction (Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, f. 205a6). Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* describes the meditative absorption of total apprehension:

From the head down to the feet,
Until [the light] reaches the heart,
The yogin enters the true limit:
This is known as “total apprehension.”

and the successive destruction:

First, the animate and the inanimate
Are transformed into luminous clarity.
Afterwards, one does the same with oneself.
These are the steps of successive destruction. (f. 205b1-3)

The outer and inner sequences of awakenings (as mentioned in the previous note) are brought about by a real consort and an imaginary one, respectively. Both entail the experience of five signs, the last of which is luminous clarity.

As explained by Butön, in the inner awakenings, first one sees a mirage-like vision engulfed in a mass of light of five colors. Second, one sees the light, which is like the light of the moon. Third, one sees the increase of light, which is like the light of the sun. Fourth, one sees the culmination of light, which is like darkness or obscurity. Then, the instant that darkness disappears, there is luminous clarity, utterly clear and ever pure; and the very nature of the ultimate truth is seen with one's pristine-awareness "eyes." Having realized the all-empty in that way, one trains first in either of the two meditative absorptions, which are the methods to enter that luminous clarity; and second, one trains in the three contemplations of luminous clarity.

For the first of the two meditative absorptions, successive destruction, one sits in the proper posture and, having previously meditated that everything is like an illusion, one regards all of the universe and its inhabitants, the animate and the inanimate, as illusion. With neither distraction nor fixation, one views everything as empty of inherent nature. As a result, all appearances gradually dissolve into luminous clarity. For the second, total apprehension, one regards oneself and all others, everything animate and inanimate in the three realms, as being the illusory body of the Great Vajradhara, and one remains in an undivided equipoise that sees things in that way. As a result, that body becomes luminous clarity, like a cloudless sky.

The three contemplations of luminous clarity are the luminous clarity of equipoise, the luminous clarity of sleep, and the luminous clarity of death (Butön's *Instruction Manual on the Five Stages*, ff. 18b3-19a2).

Sherab Gyatso describes the two meditative absorptions as follows: For the method of successive destruction, one visualizes oneself as a deity with consort. Light from one's heart strikes everything in the animate and inanimate worlds. The outer world then melts into light, which dissolves into all of the inhabitants of the universe. All beings dissolve into oneself. The consort dissolves into oneself. Oneself as the male deity dissolves into the syllable at the heart. That syllable gradually dissolves until only the *nada* remains. Then the *nada* dissolves into luminous clarity. That process whereby the outer world and sentient beings are first dissolved, after which one's own psychophysical constituents are destroyed in succession, is called successive destruction. For the method of total apprehension, one visualizes oneself as Vajradhara with consort. All aspects from the consort dissolving into oneself as Vajradhara right up to the *nada* dissolving into luminous clarity, that is, the totality of one's psychophysical constituents dissolving into luminous clarity, is called total apprehension (Sherab Gyatso's *Memorandum of Direct Instructions on the Five Stages of the Completion Phase of Guhyasamaja: The Nectar of Akshobhya's Oral Teaching*, f. 33a5-b6). See also Chapter 12, section entitled "Meditation on Luminous Clarity."

- 35 Lakshmi explains that in meditation on the true limit (the true luminous clarity), as in meditation on the eighteen emptinesses, one may stray into nihilism. To eliminate such a risk, one meditates on the stage of union in which the relative and ultimate truths are not distinguished (Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, f. 205b2-3).

In that context, union refers to that of the relative and ultimate truths. Relative truth means the body of pristine awareness, that is to say, the contemplation of the illusion-like body born from the stage of self-consecration. This body is called relative truth because it is obscured by the concept of illusion. Ultimate truth stands for the natural luminous clarity attained at the fourth stage of experience of light. These two stages becoming indistinguishable is what is meant by the stage of union at which there is no more training (*mi slob pa, aśaikṣa*), the characteristic of the stage of a bud-dha. It is of the essence of non-abiding liberation (*mi gnas pa'i mya ngan 'das*), an indivisible nature (*tha mi dad pa'i rang bzhin*). It is a contemplation whose nature is undivided attention (*rtse gcig pa'i rang bzhin du gyur pa'i ting nge 'dzin*), the contemplation of union (Lakshmi, f. 205b4-7).

Butön explains that, having entered the true limit, one experiences the absence of phenomena, and then arises from the state of luminous clarity as the body of nondual pristine awareness. With one's previous aspiration serving as the cause, one's contemplation as the facilitating condition, and recollection serving as a link, one experiences luminous clarity and the pristine awarenesses of the three lights in the reverse order, together with their winds, and one then arises as the body of Vajradhara, the nature of nondual pristine awareness. This is union (Butön's *Instruction Manual on the Five Stages*, f. 21a1-3).

At that time, cyclic existence and perfect peace, the two truths, the two phases, and so forth—all phenomena—are realized as one, a union. Having attained that union, one trains further in order to overcome obstacles and accomplish the union beyond training. Union at the stage of training involves practicing the three types of conduct while implementing vajra recitation in order to bring about others' welfare. That leads to the union beyond training, which means the exhaustion of all that is to be abandoned, the realization of all that is to be realized, and the accomplishment of one's twofold purpose (*ibid.*, f. 21b1-4).

- 36 In the way of the perfections, ten stages (*sa bcu*) of realization or awakening are enumerated: joyful (*rab tu dga' ba, pramuditā*), stainless (*dri ma med pa, vimalā*), luminous (*'od byed pa, prabhākari*), flaming (*'od 'phro ba, arciṣmatī*), invincible (*sbyang dka' ba, sudurjayā*), realized (*mngon du gyur ba, abhimukhī*), going far (*ring du song ba, dūrangamā*), unshakeable (*mi g.yo ba, acalā*), fine intelligence (*legs pa'i blo gros, sādhumatī*), cloud of teachings (*chos kyi sprin, dharmamegha*); plus the resultant stage called "all-luminous" (*kun tu 'od*). For detailed descriptions of the ten stages, see *sGam.po.pa. The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, trans. H. V. Guenther, pp. 239-256.

The individual tantras and their commentaries describe the stages of awakening using specific names. The number of stages ranges from ten to sixteen, depending on the system. The differentiation into twelve stems from tantras such as the *Sampūta* and the *Ocean of Dakinīs*. In those tantras, the first of the twelve stages is that at which a practitioner is still an ordinary being, known as conduct based on aspiration (*mos pa spyod pa*). The next ten stages correspond to the ten explained in the way of the per-

fections, from joyful to cloud of teachings. The twelfth is the stage of Vajradhara. This last appears to correspond to the all-luminous stage spoken of in the way of the perfections. See Sertok Lozang Tsultrim's *Presentation of the Stages and Paths of the Indestructible Way: The Jewel Staircase* (pp. 49-62). See also Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages* (Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, ff. 188b4-189a3) for a different interpretation of twelve stages.

- 37 During the second propagation of Buddhism in Tibet, the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* was translated by Rinchen Zangpo. After him, many Tibetan translators journeyed to India and received the Guhyasamaja teaching, but the most important traditions of the Arya system of the Guhyasamaja were established by Marpa Chökyi Lodrö (Mar pa chos kyi blo gros) (1012-1097) and Gö Khugpa Lhetsé ('Gos khug pa lhas btsas). The tradition that stemmed from Marpa and was transmitted through his disciple Tsurtonpa (mTshur ston pa) is known as the Marpa tradition. Gö Khugpa Lhetsé received the transmission of the Guhyasamaja from seventy masters (including Devakarachandra and Viryabhadra) and two dakinis. In Tibet, he thoroughly revised the Guhyasamaja texts that had already been translated. He had numerous outstanding disciples, and his transmission is known as the Gö tradition. Both traditions, that of Marpa and that of Gö Lotsawa, were received by Butön Rinchen Drup. For the life of Marpa, see Tsang Nyön Heruka's *The Life of Marpa the Translator* (English translation).
- 38 The teachings of Marpa's tradition are found in Taranatha's *Guhyasamaja Tantra, Arya Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Five Stages*. The teachings of the Gö tradition are found in Taranatha's *Guhyasamaja Tantra, Arya Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Five Stages Transmitted through Gö Lotsawa*.
- 39 Buddhashrijnana (Jnanapada), *Oral Teachings of Manjushri/ Meditation on the Essential Principles of the Two Stages*, Toh. 1853, vol. Di.
- 40 Buddhashrijnana, also known as Jnanapada and Buddhajnanapada, was a disciple of Haribhadra and the tutor of King Dharmapala who reigned between 770 and 810 C.E. Buddhashrijnana consecrated Vikramashila Monastery where he became one of the main teachers. See Taranatha's *History of Buddhism in India* (English translation), pp. 260, 276, 278; and *The Blue Annals*, trans. Roerich, pp. 369-370.
- 41 Buddhashrijnana's *Vital Essence of Liberation* (Toh.1859), vol. Di.
- 42 For a description of the arising of the four joys (*dga' ba bzhi*), initial joy, supreme joy, special joy, and innate joy, see Chapter 3, n. 82.
- 43 See Chapter 12, section entitled "Meditation on Luminous Clarity."
- 44 Buddhashrijnana's *Oral Teachings of Manjushri* (Toh. 1853), vol. Di, f. 3a3-4.
- 45 Sertok Lozang Tsultrim describes this phase of completion in his *Presentation of the Stages and Paths of the Indestructible Way: The Jewel Staircase*. He explains that the phase of completion in the Jnanapada system is a path comprising four yogas differentiated in terms of the four joys.

First, in one's heart is imagined the pristine-awareness being within whose heart is an insignia with an indestructible sphere of vital essence (*mi zhigs pa'i thig le*) at

its center. One visualizes the entire mandala, as in the creation phase, within that sphere. In the heart of the main deity of that mandala is an indestructible sphere of vital essence from which special “emanating and withdrawing” is performed. Having repeated the emanating and withdrawing many times, one focuses the mind on that sphere. This is the way one applies the yoga from the perspective of joy.

Then, the sphere of vital essence at the heart descends to the secret place where it is held. Within that sphere, one visualizes the entire mandala. In the heart of the main deity is a sphere of vital essence. Focusing the mind on that, one performs the many special emanations and withdrawals. As a result, the five signs, mirage, smoke, fireflies, lamp, light of space, and other signs manifest. This is the way one applies the yoga from the perspective of the supreme joy.

By training in the yoga of vital essence in those two ways, the vital essences become workable. Thereafter, one contemplates an emanation sphere of vital essence at the nose-tip (*sna rtse sprul pa'i thig le*) at the upper door, training in the vajra recitation and various other special practices. One thereby gains the understanding that all phenomena are like magical creations, and so forth. This is the way one applies yoga from the perspective of the joy free from attachment.

Next, one trains in the wind yoga, by means of which the winds become workable. Once the vital essences and winds are brought under one's control through these yogas, one imagines, as before, the entire mandala in the center of the sphere in the insignia at the heart of the pristine-awareness being. At the heart of the main deity is the special indestructible vital-essence sphere (*mi shigs pa'i thig le khyad par can*), from which emanates light that dissolves the entire universe and draws into it all beings. The beings themselves are transformed into light and absorbed into oneself. At the end of the gradual dissolution effected by the meditative absorption of successive destruction (*rjes gzhi gi ting nge 'dzin*), one focuses the mind on the vital-essence sphere in what is called “an emptiness-related contemplation.” Gradually, there again manifests the mandala at the heart, as well as the mandala of the pledge-being, the beings, and the universe. In that way, one repeatedly contemplates dissolution in the forward order (*lugs 'byung du sdud pa*) into luminous clarity and the re-emergence in the reverse order (*lugs ldog tu ldang ba*). As a result, the five signs manifest, and thereafter one attains the body of pure pristine awareness, the indivisibility of profundity and clarity. This is the way one applies the yoga from the perspective of the innate joy (a summary of Sertok Lozang Tsultrim's *Presentation of the Stages and Paths of the Indestructible Way: The Jewel Staircase*, ff. 128-129).

For presentations of the steps of meditation in those yogas, see Buddhashrijana's *Guide to the Means of Self-Attainment* (Toh. 1860, vol. Di, ff. 52b2-54b4) and *Sadhana called Samantabhadra* (Toh. 1855); Shriphalavajra's *Commentary on the Sadhana of Samantabhadra* (Toh. 1867); Thagana's *Commentary on the Sadhana of Glorious Samantabhadra* (Toh. 1868); and Taranatha's *Guhyasamaja Tantra, Arya Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Five Stages*.

- 46 The term “great seal” (*phyag rgya chen po, mahāmudrā*), when used to refer to the body of the deity, is similar to its use in the context of the four seals as understood in yoga tantra (*rnal 'byor rgyud, yogatantra*). As Padmavajra explains, the great seal is the image of the deity's body, which reveals the nature of the deity. Since that image serves as the primary basis for meditation on the essential nature of the deity, it is called the

- “great seal” (Padmavajra’s *Commentary [on Buddhaguhya’s] Guide to the Meaning of Tantra*, Toh. 2502, vol. I, f. 94b5-6).
- 47 Buddhashrijnana’s *Vital Essence of Liberation* (Toh. 1859), vol. Di, f. 47b2-4.
- 48 “I have an essential nature of indivisible emptiness and pristine awareness” (*om śūnyatā jñāna vajra svabhāvātmako ’ham*).
- 49 Read *khyad par ba* for *khyad par pa*.
- 50 These instructions are found in Taranatha’s *Guhyasamaja Tantra Manual of Instructions on the Muktitilaka* (Toh. 1853), a *Teaching of Buddhashrijnana on the Guhyasamaja*.
- 51 These instructions are found in Taranatha’s *Guhyasamaja Tantra, Jnanapada Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Indivisibility of Clarity and Profundity*.
- 52 Jnanapada composed the *Sadhana called Samantabhadra* and other works. Most Tibetan and Indian followers of the Jnanapada tradition know the procedure of that path through collective explanations (*tshogs bshad*) only. The second completion phase is a partial one, while the third represents the complete path. Its essential points are to be known from the *Oral Teachings of Manjushri* and the *Vital Essence of Liberation*.
- 53 Kunga Drolchok (Kun dga’ grol mchog) (1507-1566), an eminent master of the Jonang school, was said to have taken rebirth as Taranatha, also known as Jonang Jetsun, the Venerable Master of Jonang.
- 54 Sixfold yoga of the Guhyasamaja (*gsang ’dus kyi sbyor drug*) refers to the six practices known by the same names as the six yogas of the Kalachakra: withdrawal (*sor sdud, pratyāhāra*), meditative absorption (*bsam gtan, dhyāna*), yoga of the winds (*srog rtsol, prāṇāyāma*), retention (*’dzin pa, dhāraṇā*), recollection (*rjes dran, anusmṛti*), and contemplation (*ting nge ’dzin, samādhi*). For an explanation of these in the context of the Guhyasamaja, see Nagarjuna’s *Large Commentary on the Eighteenth Chapter*, Toh.1784, vol. Sa, ff. 294b4-7; 310b7-312b4.
- 55 This is the same text as the one mentioned just below, Saraha’s *Treasury of Doha Songs*, Toh. 2224, vol. Wi.
- 56 *Black Yamari Tantra* (Toh. 467). The commentary referred to here is probably Ratnakarashantipa’s *Jewel Lamp Commentary on Difficult Points of the Glorious Black Yamari Tantra*, often referred to simply as *Jewel Lamp Black Yamari Commentary* (Toh. 1919), vol. Bi, ff. 124-172.
- 57 Jnanapada is considered the second (in chronological order) of the important masters to have propagated the Yamari tantras in India. Three works on Yamari found in the Tenggur (Toh. 2284, 2285, and 2286) are attributed to him.
- 58 Shape yoga (*dbyibs kyi rnal ’byor*) is considered to be the initial yoga (*rnal ’byor dang po, yoga*); the mantra yoga (*sngags kyi rnal ’byor*), the subsequent yoga (*rjes su rnal ’byor, anuyoga*); the consecration yoga (*byin rlabs kyi rnal ’byor*), the surpassing yoga (*shin tu rnal ’byor, atiyoga*); the pristine-awareness yoga (*ye shes kyi rnal ’byor*), the great yoga (*rnal ’byor chen po, mahāyoga*).

- 59 As for the stage of self-consecration, a person of average capabilities meditates on the mandala of thirteen deities and holds the mind on the entirety of the circle of the deities. Persons of highest and lesser capabilities hold their minds on the simple form of the deity (*Ihan skyes*) only.

For the consecration of appearances, one visualizes oneself as the deity and imagines that light radiates from the heart and dissolves all the appearances of the universe and beings. Then, in an instant, from emptiness, the universe appears as the celestial palace, clearly and unimpededly, and sentient beings appear as forms of the body of Yamari.

For the consecration of the union, one imagines that in an instant, from emptiness, oneself and all appearances appear clearly as forms of the deity, while recognizing the illusory nature of the deity (a summary of Taranatha's *Yamari, Red, Manual of Instructions on the Four-Yoga Practice*, pp. 615.1-617.1).

- 60 Taranatha explains that the preliminary practice for the yoga of mantra consists of the four wind practices (involving special ways of breathing, sitting, visualization, etc.). The main part consists in the application of the four types of transference practices in a single breath cycle or in four separate cycles. For this, having adopted the appropriate position, one performs guru yoga and visualizes oneself as Yamari, empty inside. While imagining the winds exiting as light, one purifies the breath three times and applies the specified breath-control technique and eye-focus. The conclusion is the clearing out of the breath from both nostrils three times and remaining still for the specified time while allowing the breath to move normally and the mind to rest in its natural state.

For the upward transference of consciousness, during one's life one trains in directing the specified syllable (that symbolizes one's mind) upward through the central channel and then bringing it back down. This practice involves a complex visualization of syllables. Then, at the time of death, one implements the training by applying a breath-control technique and projecting consciousness into space.

The transference of consciousness to the master entails the visualization of the syllable alone, which is directed to and dissolves into the heart of one's master visualized above one's head.

Five types of transference methods are mentioned: (1) The master is visualized on the top of one's head, the upper extremity of one's central channel joined to the lower extremity of the central channel of the master. (2) The right channel is imagined to be blocked by vowels, and the left channel, by consonants. A syllable is projected from one's heart into space while uttering the specified sound. (3) While in the squatting position, one visualizes a syllable at the navel and the same syllable at the heart, their lights sealing off the nine orifices of the body. One imagines that the heart's syllable is projected into the heart of the deity above one's head. (4) One meditates on empty form and mixes consciousness with space. (5) One visualizes one's master as the deity Yamari on top of a huge tree, equal in size to Mount Meru, in front of oneself. In one's own heart is imagined one's master, in whose heart is a set of syllables. One projects the syllables into the Yamari on the tree. One's mind, the mind of the master, and space merge, and one remains in that state (a summary of Taranatha's *Yamari, Red, Manual of Instructions on the Four-Yoga Practice*, pp. 621.3-624.6).

Taranatha's explanation of the transference of consciousness is based on Shri-

dhara's *Esoteric Instructions on the Upward Transference of Consciousness* (Toh. 2041), vol. Tsi.

- 61 In the stage of consecration yoga, one's own body as method refers to a form of inner fire (explained in Taranatha's *Yamari, Red, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase*, pp. 649.1-650.2), the instructions for which constitute the special completion phase of the Yamari (see next section, entitled "The Special Completion Phase"). The body of another as wisdom refers to the practice with a wisdom woman (*shes rab ma*), also known as the yoga of the vital-essence sphere (*thigle rnal 'byor*). The instructions include specifications regarding the characteristics of the seal, the methods of union (familiarization, attainment, and action), crucial points of esoteric instructions, and methods to sustain pristine awareness (a summary of Taranatha's *Yamari, Red, Manual of Instructions on the Four-Yoga Practice*, p. 625.1-2).

- 62 Subtle and coarse constituents (*kham phra rags*) pertain to the body, mind, and the two together.

Those constituents pertaining to the body include one's own body of flesh, bones, blood, and so forth (the coarse constituents); the stationary channels, moving winds, and the arrayed vital essences (*bodhichitta*) (the subtle); and the winds of five-colored lights (the very subtle).

Those pertaining to the mind include the five sense consciousnesses (the coarse); conceptual consciousness and the eighty natural conceptions (the subtle); and the four stages of light (the very subtle).

Those pertaining to both mind and body include the twenty-five "natures," which refers to the five aggregates (forms, etc.), the five elements (earth, etc.), the five sense powers (the eyes, etc.), the five objects (forms, etc.), and the five pristine awarenesses (mirror-like, etc.) at the ground stage (the twenty-five coarse); the natural conceptions and the winds that serve as their mounts (the subtle); and the four lights and the winds that serve as their mounts (the very subtle). See Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 266-269.

- 63 The text alluded to here is likely Shridhara's *Consecration of Protection Amulets and Esoteric Instructions on Averting Trouble*, which explains six ways of averting trouble (*phyir zlog pa drug*), namely, using substances (*rdzas*), mantras (*sngags*), the yoga of the winds (*rlung sbyor*), contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin*), unequalled means (*mnyam med*), and the safeguarding of what is beyond safeguarding (*srung ba med pa'i bsrung ba*). These six are to be applied when one experiences signs or dreams foretelling of danger or difficulty.

For the first, Shridhara mentions several substances that are used to avert obstacles—acacia, musk, sweetflag, *Commiphora mukul*, mustard seed, coral, red sandalwood, and so forth—that are applied to specified places on the body. For the second, using mantras to avert serious obstacles, one first must develop the four boundless qualities (love, compassion, joy, and equanimity) and bring to mind emptiness by reciting the *svabhava* mantra. Then, through steps of visualization, one imagines in the space in front a protection circle with ten wrathful deities and oneself as Yamari, who orders innumerable emanations of Takkiraja to eliminate all obstacles and interferences. For the third, to avert obstacles caused by being overcome by concepts and adherence to inherent existence, one applies the yoga of the winds

(*prāṇāyāma*) that directs the winds of the right and left channels into the central channel, thereby dispelling all thoughts and transforming all winds into pristine-awareness wind. For the fourth, when beset by provocations, dangers, illnesses, and so forth, one uses contemplation to realize that these obstacles have no true existence, and one reflects on the qualities of one's master. As a result, all elements of harm dissolve by themselves. For the fifth, the unequalled means, one overcomes the dualistic notions of cyclic existence and liberation by meditating that one's psychophysical constituents are buddhas, and so forth. For the sixth, one understands that everything is the mind of awakening, pure and total presence, all-encompassing yet inexpressible. As a result, the reactions of acceptance and rejection in relation to cyclic existence and liberation vanish like clouds in the sky. See Shridhara's *Consecration of Protection Amulets and Esoteric Instructions on Averting Trouble*, Toh. 2045, vol. Tsi, ff. 144b7-146b1.

According to Taranatha, as a preliminary to the pristine-awareness yoga, one assumes the correct physical posture, breathes normally, and leaves the mind free from thoughts. Dispelling both agitation and torpor, one looks sharply at the nature of the mind, recognizing its sheer clarity and seeing that the clarity has no inherent existence. Its unceasing energy manifests as everything, yet is free from self and other, birth, cessation, and abiding. In that way, everything is viewed as emptiness. As a result of that practice, the inner coarse and subtle constituents dissolve in the central channel.

For the main part, in order to cultivate the union of the deity's body and luminous clarity, one first visualizes the mandala as a whole, or the simple form of the deity, while never being separate from the view of emptiness. At the heart of the pristine-awareness being is a red four-petalled lotus, with a moon at the center and a syllable above. Light radiates from the syllable and transforms the universe into a celestial palace and sentient beings into Yamari, all of which appears unceasingly while one continues to meditate on emptiness. Everything then dissolves into light and is absorbed into oneself as Yamari with consort. One dissolves into the pristine-awareness being, which dissolves into the lotus, and so on, until only the syllable remains; and then that vanishes like a cloud in the sky. One remains in contemplation on emptiness. Then, from emptiness, the syllable appears; from the syllable, in an instant, the entire mandala appears. One repeats that procedure many times.

The supplementary practice, by means of which negative conditions are used as the path, has several aspects: When one is faced with harmful actions of enemies, provocations, sicknesses, dangers, fears, worries, and so forth, one recognizes such disturbances as being one's own mind, thinking "whatever arises simply arises." One mixes the disturbance with one's mind or allows it to dissolve into oneself. In the end, all negative conditions vanish into space, or emptiness, and one remains in the inseparability of space and natural awareness.

At other times, one views the harm and the one causing harm as illusion, or one meditates on the cause of the obstacle as a deity. As a result, one recognizes that neither the harm nor the harming agent have any inherent existence. Alternatively, one uses devotion to one's master and fervent supplication to bring about the understanding that obstacles are simply the magical manifestations of one's own mind. Recognizing that all phenomena are in nature ultimate reality and in essence innate bliss, and knowing their unceasing manifestations to be pristine awareness and therefore

perfect from the beginning as mandalas of deities, one remains free from acceptance and rejection. One meditates on compassion for all sentient beings who do not realize this; then, mixing compassion with space, one remains in equipoise. In these ways, obstacles become the source of powers (a summary of Taranatha's *Yamari, Red, Manual of Instructions on the Four-Yoga Practice*, pp. 625.2-628.3).

- 64 The Red Yamari tantra referred to here is the main one (Toh. 474). Other tantras of the Red Yamari cycle in the Kangyur are Toh. 475 and Toh. 478. The Black Yamari tantras are Toh. 467, 469, and 473 (Toh. 473 is also known as the *Six-Faced Black Yamari Tantra*). The Vajrabhairava tantras are Toh. 468 (the main one) and Toh. 470. On the various assertions concerning these three tantras (Red Yamari, Black Yamari, and Bhairava), see Taranatha's *Yamari Cycle of Tantra, History of the Teachings*, pp. 10.1-40.3.
- 65 Shridhara (dPal 'dzin), also known as the Buffalo-Headed Scholar, is the third great master in the three periods of the propagation in India of the Black Yamari, Red Yamari, and Vajrabhairava (Lalitavajra being the first; Jnanapada, the second). Taranatha explains that he was the student of Charyapa and places him in the word lineage. See Taranatha's *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*.
The Tengyur attributes to Shridhara twenty-five texts related to the Yamari cycle: Toh. 1918 (a commentary on the *Black Yamari Tantra*), Toh. 1923-1925, 1975, 1977, 1988, 1990-1992, 2023-2030, 2038-2043, and 2045-2046.
- 66 Virupa was one of the most celebrated tantric masters of ancient India. For his life story, see *Luminous Lives*, trans. C. Stearns (Wisdom, 2001). The Tengyur contains the following works of Virupa related to the Yamari tantra: Toh. 2017-2020, 2022, 2044. These were translated by Chak Lotsawa (Chag lo tsa ba), who therefore figures prominently in the transmission of the Yamari cycle.
- 67 These words appear in Virupa's *Esoteric Instructions on Essential Principles, the Utterly Simple* (Toh. 2020), vol. Tsi, f. 83a6.
- 68 *spros pa bcad*. Line one of the root text just above should read *spros bcad*, not *spros bcas*.
- 69 The preliminary guru-yoga practice consists of two parts: cutting conceptual elaborations and gaining powers. For the first, having taken refuge and generated the awakening mind, one visualizes the circle of protection and within it the mandala. At the center, upon a throne, appears one's master as Red Yamari. One offers to the master the objects of one's attachment, aversion, and indifference. Then, light radiates from the heart of the master and invites the masters, deities, bodhisattvas, buddhas, guardians, and protectors, who settle around him. Light again radiates from the master's heart and transforms all sentient beings into Yamari. They settle around the great gathering. One views this as the field through which one can cut conceptual elaborations. To do so, one makes three types of offerings: the offerings that are creations of one's imagination, such as flowers; the offering of the objects of one's attachment, aversion, and indifference; and the offering of one's body visualized as a pool of nectar. For the second part of the guru yoga, the gaining of powers, one contemplates that one's own body, speech, and mind are of the same flavor as the master's body, speech, and mind (a summary of Taranatha's *Yamari, Red, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase*, pp. 635.5-638.3).

- 70 The main practice is the contemplation of the ineffable for which one adopts the seven points of posture of Vairochana, allows one's speech (i.e., the winds) to move naturally, and allows one's mind to diffuse throughout all space. Then, one carries out various cycles of meditations: one remains in the state of equipoise wherein mind and thoughts are inseparable from space, the nature of emptiness, beyond all conceptual elaborations and free from effort and fabrication; one sees all thoughts as simply clarity and emptiness; and one recognizes all sense faculties as clarity and emptiness. By means of four introductions, one recognizes the essential reality of the ineffable; the natures of the five pristine awarenesses; the natures of the five dimensions of awakening; and the natures of the unceasing manifestations of appearances, thoughts, and so on.

The instructions on stabilizing luminous clarity are applied after the main practice of the ineffable. According to these instructions, when the mind is agitated by strong thoughts, dread, or anxiety, one eliminates the disturbance by visualizing oneself as Yamari, an empty shell, and imagines that one draws in all the thoughts, and so forth, through the nine orifices. At the heart they form a single sphere of light from which arises a tiny sphere that moves throughout the body and then is finally ejected. One rests the mind for a while and then completes the last steps of the visualization, finally remaining in contemplation, as before, in a state beyond the limits of elaborations (a summary of Taranatha's *Yamari, Red, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase*, pp. 638.3-641.2). See also Virupa's *Esoteric Instructions on Essential Reality, the Utterly Simple*, Toh. 2020, vol. Tsi, ff. 81a-84a.

- 71 The sixfold means for cultivating pure and total awareness or presence refers to six yogas. For the first, the guru yoga (*bla ma'i rnal 'byor*) (the blessing), one takes refuge in the guru and other awakened beings, generates the awakening mind, and visualizes oneself as Yamari. On top of one's head is imagined one's own master upon a lotus and moon seat on a jewel throne. One makes fervent supplications to the master to be blessed, and so forth, whereupon the master dissolves into oneself. One views one's own body, speech, and mind as inseparable from the body, speech, and mind of the master. During the post-meditation period, whenever possible, one supplicates the master. At night, when going to sleep, one visualizes the master in the same way, makes supplications, and imagines that the master descends into one's own heart and remains there in a "tent" of light. Due to the power of fervent devotion, coarse thoughts cease, the mind remains relaxed and natural, quiet and without tension, throughout day and night, in meditation and in post-meditation periods, and innate pristine awareness manifests. As this contemplation blesses oneself, it is known as the practice related to blessing.

For the second, the compassion yoga (*snying rje'i rnal 'byor*) (the unequalled), as in the previous (the guru yoga), one takes refuge, generates the mind of awakening, and imagines oneself as Yamari with one's master on the head, who one supplicates. One visualizes one's enemies in front, regards them with benevolence (since all beings without exception have helped one greatly at some time in the past and are now suffering due to their unvirtuous deeds), and wishes that they might attain the state of Yamari. Knowing all appearances to be one's own mind, one remains in the ineffable state, as before.

For the third, the causal yoga (*rgyu'i rnal 'byor*) (the root), one trains in the awak-

ening mind, which means to develop the altruistic wish (the cause) to awaken for the sake of others and to exchange one's own happiness for the sufferings of others.

For the fourth, the yoga of the winds (*rlung gi rnal 'byor*) (the *pranayama*), one begins with taking refuge and generating the awakening mind. Sitting in the proper seven-point posture, one imagines oneself clearly as Yamari, a rainbow body, hollow inside. One brings to mind one's master and applies the specified breath-control technique. Then, the residual breath—both the upper and the lower—is expelled according to the instructions. As one fills the body with the breath, one imagines that the five-colored light of the breath pervades the body from the crown of the head to the feet. Then, relying on the vase-shaped holding, one carries out four specific physical yogas. At the end, with relaxed mind, one remains in the ineffable state.

For the fifth, the substance yoga (*rdzas kyi rnal 'byor*) (the interconnectedness), one takes medicines prepared with prescribed ingredients that act to make the mind and senses clear, improve health, and generate contemplation of the ineffable.

For the sixth, the Vajrabhairava yoga (*rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi rnal 'byor*), one trains in the yogas of using one's own body as method and using the body of another as wisdom. For the first, one practices the yoga of inner fire and the yoga of the vital-essence sphere. When the experience of inner fire has developed, one remains in the contemplation that mixes that inner fire with the pristine awareness of the ineffable. The yoga of the vital-essence sphere involves training in a special form of the vase-shaped holding, while visualizing the winds as five-colored lights, which, from the nostrils or the mid-point between the eyebrows, enter the central channel and descend, like a stream of incense smoke, to the secret place, and so on, forming a sphere of rainbow light. Then, again like a stream of incense smoke, the five-colored lights rise up. As for the yoga that uses the body of another as wisdom, this practice is to be carried out according to oral instructions.

As for the way to dispel obstacles or hindrances, one should first understand that the causes of obstacles are apprehension of a self, emotional afflictions, and karma. The contributory factors in the arising of obstacles are to frequent bad places, have bad companions, be attracted to worldly activities, be carried away by the eight mundane concerns, and engage in careless behavior. The methods for dispelling obstacles are to view all sicknesses, harmful spirits, suffering, emotional afflictions, and so forth, as one's own mind and to rely on the esoteric instructions of one's master to gain certainty of that. The measure of success is to have averted or pacified those obstacles.

There are six types of esoteric instructions for dispelling obstacles or hindrances: The first is to rely on devotion to one's master. The second is to visualize offering one's own body, as in the practice of severance (*gcod*). The third is to dissolve obstacles into the ineffable state by applying the appropriate technique for specific obstacles. The fourth is to separate the basis and the based (i.e., body and mind), which means to imagine all obstacles being drawn in through the nine orifices, becoming a flame of light at one's heart, exiting from a hole in the region of the heart, and vanishing into space; and then to remain in the ineffable state. The fifth is to release thoughts into the dimension of space (emptiness), which means to transform thoughts into pristine awareness. The sixth is to have gained stability in the first five methods so that one is able to dissolve all forms of pleasure and suffering—everything related to body, speech, mind—into emptiness, and one is able to do so in any situation

(a summary of Taranatha's *Yamari, Red, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase*, pp. 642.2-654.3).

For details on all of these special methods related to the completion phase, see Virupa's *Esoteric Instructions on Essential Reality, the Utterly Simple*, Toh. 2020, vol. Tsi, ff. 81a-84a.

- 72 Lowo Lotsawa Sherab Rinchen (Glo bo lo tsa ba shes rab rin chen): A disciple of great masters such as Darpana Acharya, from whom he received the transmission of the Red Yamari according to the lineage of Virupa and then spread the teaching throughout central Tibet. See *The Blue Annals*, trans. Roerich, pp. 379, 1046.
- 73 Lowo Lotsawa's commentary on the *Concluding Session* (*gTong thun*) (read *gtong thun* for *gtang thun*) seems to be a commentary on Virupa's work (Toh. 2020). Text not identified.
- 74 The tantra referred to here is most likely *Black Yamari Tantra: Bodies, Voices, Minds of All Transcendent Ones* (Toh. 467). All five commentaries contained in the Tengyur on the Black Yamari (those of Shridhara, Shantipa, Krishna, Avadhutipa, and Padmapani) are commentaries on this very tantra. What is called the *Black Enemy Tantra* (*dGra nag po'i rgyud*) is actually this tantra. There are no commentaries in the Tengyur on the *Red Yamari Tantra* (Toh. 474).
- 75 The initial yoga of the Yamari comprises six yogas. The first, withdrawal (*sor sdud*, *pratyaḥāra*), means to hold the mind, without any distraction, on a part of the vital-essence yoga or on the overall form of the deity of the mandala.

The second branch, that of meditative absorption (*bsam gtan*, *dhyāna*), has five parts: To be able to clearly visualize, for a period of time, the overall form of the deity as a whole is the first part of this branch, called examination. To hold the mind on the subtle details of the deity's form is the second part, analysis. The arising of the joyful mind from that analysis is the third part, joy. The arising of the utterly refined bliss is the fourth part, bliss. The clear appearance of the form of the deity, manifesting naturally while the mind remains in a nonconceptual state, is the fifth part, undivided attention.

For the third branch, that of the yoga of winds (*srog rtsol*, *prāṇāyāma*), one holds the mind on a tiny sphere, of the specified color, that rests in the space of the female, and while doing so, applies the specified wind technique. One imagines a syllable in the jewel, manipulates the lower winds, and holds the mind on the sphere, which rests like a dewdrop above the syllable.

The fourth branch, that of retention (*'dzin pa*, *dhāraṇā*), means to experience the arising of the five signs as a result of the previous practice.

For the fifth branch, that of recollection (*rjes dran*, *anusmṛti*), one visualizes a sphere as an eight-sided jewel, half of which is positioned at the entrance to the lower channel of the male deity and half at that of the female. When meditation on that is stable, one imagines the light from the two halves of that jewel fills the bodies of the male and female deities and radiates outward from the pores of the skin, emanating and drawing back an infinity of insignia such as wheels, vajras, and lotuses. Then all the buddhas enter one's body, transform into spheres of vital essence at one's heart, are emanated outside in the forms of the insignia such as the wheels, and so on, through the steps of the visualization. This branch is divided into six parts: The emanation and withdrawal of the wheels is the recollection of the awakened body; the lotuses,

the recollection of the teachings, the awakened voice; the vajras, the recollection of the indestructible, the awakened mind; the swords, the recollection of the awakened families; the thirteen deities, the recollection of the wrathful deities; and the bliss, the recollection of the commitments.

For the sixth branch, that of contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin, samādhi*), one invites the buddhas and bodhisattvas, who enter one's mouth and descend to one's heart, where they transform into a vital-essence sphere, resting on a moon disk. The sphere at the point of union is drawn up to the sphere at the heart, where it dissolves. The sphere at the heart performs the emanation and withdrawal (a summary of Taranatha's *Yamari, Black, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase according to the Zhang Tradition*, pp. 540.3-542.2).

76 Read *rim pa gnyid la* for *rim pa gnyid pa la*.

77 For the focus on mantra, there are four branches: First, one instantaneously creates a celestial palace and the main deities in their entirety. At one's heart is a seed-syllable on a sun disk (the branch of discernment). Next, light emanates from the syllable (the branch of light). Then, from that light, the three existences are emanated (the branch of increase). One imagines that the three existences, in the form of light, are drawn into the syllable and meditated upon as being simply mind (the branch of unified meaning).

For the focus on mind, one places one's mind in the inseparability of clarity and emptiness while focusing on the syllable on which the light has reconverged.

For the examination of the vajra field of the body, light again emanates (the branch of culmination) and brings about the welfare of beings (the increase). The seed-syllable transforms into Akshobhya, which is the meaning of the path of seeing.

For the examination of the vajra field of speech, one meditates on emptiness to recognize that body, speech, and mind are empty.

For the examination of the vajra field of mind, one imagines that, due to the upward flow of the downward-voiding wind, a syllable moves from the point of union through the path of the central channel to the tip of the nose. There it transforms into a vajra, the size and color as specified in the instructions, with a sun disk and another syllable in its center. It emanates from the right nostril and enters through the left nostril. Then it dissolves into the seed-syllable at the heart.

For the examination of the vajra fields of all three faculties, one imagines that from the three syllables at the three places emanate lights that draw in all the buddhas in the forms of the four goddesses of Yamari. These change into the form of a red vital-essence sphere, which melts into separate spheres: one of the spheres rests at the tip of the secret place of the male; one, at the nose-tip (the lower extremity of the central channel) of the consort; and one, at the point of union, each of a different color. One focuses the mind on these.

Following those examinations, one practices the subsequent yoga by meditating on the bliss of union, maintaining the pride of being the deity, emanating offering goddesses from the space of the seal, and performing the visualization as in the sadhana (a summary of Taranatha's *Yamari, Black, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase according to the Zhang Tradition*, pp. 542.2-543.4).

78 Having gained stability in the previous yoga, one then practices the complete yoga (*rdzogs pa'i rnal 'byor*): For this, one first prepares a drawing of the mandala for the

practice. Then, together with a wisdom woman (awareness consort), one performs elaborate activities called the “deliberate behavior of awareness” (*rig pa'i brtul zbugs, vidyāvrata*) (a summary of Taranatha's *Yamari, Black, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase according to the Zhang Tradition*, p. 543.4-5). *Vidyavrata* means the conduct of the *vidya* where *vidya* denotes an awareness female (*rig ma*) (a consort).

- 79 Next is the great yoga (*rnal 'byor chen po*). Having gained slight stability in the complete yoga, one dispenses with the external mandala and trains solely in manifesting luminous clarity. In conjunction with the external factor of the pristine-awareness seal or the action seal, in the state of equipoise one meditates on all phenomena as pristine awareness, the indivisibility of bliss and emptiness. In the post-meditation period, one views all sounds and appearances, which are the unimpeded manifestations of that pristine awareness, as the body of the deity. One performs the conduct called the “all-encompassing conduct of the lord” (*mgon po kun tu spyod pa*), which gives rise to the understanding that all conduct is the nature of pristine awareness (a summary of Taranatha's *Yamari, Black, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase according to the Zhang Tradition*, p. 543.5-7).
- 80 We have not been able to trace the Devakarachandra text that Kongtrul is referring to here and that Taranatha calls the “supreme authoritative work on the four yogas” (*rnal 'byor bzhi pa'i gzhung mchog*) (see Taranatha's *Yamari, Black, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase according to the Zhang Tradition*, p. 544.5). Taranatha's *Yamari Cycle of Tantra, History of the Teachings* (p. 131.1) states that “this text has not been included in the Tengyur.”
- 81 Zhang Lotsawa Sherab Lama (Zhang po lo tsa ba shes rab bla ma), more commonly known as Zhang Chodru Lotsawa Sherab Lama (Zhang co gru lo tsa ba shes rab bla ma), received the Black Yamari and Vajrabhairava transmissions directly from the Indian Devakarachandra and then propagated those tantras in Tibet. The system that developed is known as the Zhang tradition (*zhang lugs*).
- 82 By examining Taranatha's *Guhyasamaja Tantra Manual of Instructions on the Muktitilaka, a Teaching of Buddhashrijnana on the Guhyasamaja*, it becomes evident that the completion phase of the Yamari tantras and that of the Guhyasamaja of the Jnanapada tradition are very similar.
- 83 As mentioned above (Chapter 7, n. 64), the two tantras of the Vajrabhairava cycle contained in the Kangyur are the *Mahavajrabhairava Tantra* (Toh. 468) and the *Shrivajrabhairava Kalpa Tantraraja* (Toh. 470).
- 84 In the Tengyur, a single work related to the Vajrabhairava cycle, the *Vajrabhairava Feast Offering Ritual* (Toh. 1995), is attributed to Shantipa (Ratnakarashantipa). The esoteric instructions mentioned here, the gathering of nectar (*bdud rtsi bsdu ba*) and the nose-tip yoga (*sna rtse'i rnal 'byor*), may also be derived from this text. We have not been able to trace these esoteric instructions.
- 85 Read *sgreng* for *sbreng*. We have not been able to trace the following esoteric instructions: the innate dimension of utterly unelaborate profundity (*shin tu spros med zab mo'i dbyings lhan cig skyes pa'i man ngag*); the completion phase of the tiers of the three beings (the pledge-being, the contemplation-being, and the pristine-awareness

- being) (*rdzogs rim sems dpa' sum brtsegs*); the yoga of the buffalo face (*ma be'i zhal*); the yoga of the erect penis (*mtshan ma gyen sgren*).
- 86 This is the tradition of Ra Lotsawa Dorjé Drak (Rwa lo tsa ba rdo rje grags). Ra Lotsawa received the Black Yamari, Red Yamari, and Vajrabhairava transmissions mainly from the Nepalese Mahakaruna and greatly propagated them in Tibet. It is said that the disciples to whom he gave the Red Yamari transmission numbered two thousand. His main disciple, Ra Chorab, as well as other of his many disciples, taught these tantras extensively.
- 87 We have not been able to trace the following esoteric instructions: the horn-tips method for holding the mind (*rwa rtse sems 'dzin*); the esoteric instructions for wandering at night (*mtshan mo rgyu ba'i mang ngag*).
- 88 The Kyo tradition (*skyo lugs*) stems from Lama Kyo who received the teachings of Vajrabhairava from Amoghavajra (the younger) when Amoghavajra visited Tibet.
- 89 The inner fire involving four channel-wheels (*gtum mo 'khor lo bzhi pa*) refers to the practice of igniting the inner fire in the region of the fourth channel-wheel, that of the navel.
- 90 Presumably the Zhang tradition (*zhang lugs*), which stems from Chodru Lotsawa Sherab Lama (mentioned above, Chapter 7, n. 81).
- 91 The *Net of Magical Manifestation of Manjushri* (Toh. 360), also known as *Chanting the Names of Manjushri*, is considered to be in a class by itself because this work has a set of commentaries as a highest yoga tantra (Toh. 1395 to 1400; 2090 to 2121) and another set as a yoga tantra (Toh. 2532 to 2622). As a highest yoga tantra, it is explained in terms of the Kalachakra tantra and in terms of the father tantra of the delusion (*gti mug*) class. It is possibly because of this last point and because Yamari is considered a wrathful aspect of Manjushri that here the completion phase of the *Net of Magical Manifestation of Manjushri* is mentioned in the context of the discussion of the completion phase of Yamari. This scripture, *Net of Magical Manifestation of Manjushri*, has also been explained in terms of the great perfection (*dzogchen*) by Garab Dorjé (Toh. 2093) and Vimalamitra (Toh. 2092). The tantra itself was first translated by Rinchen Zangpo and subsequently revised by several translators.

CHAPTER 8: MOTHER TANTRA SYSTEMS: KALACHAKRA AND HEVAJRA

- 1 Here the title *Supreme Primordial Buddha* refers to the *Kalachakra Concise Tantra* contained in the Kangyur (Toh. 362) and also the teachings of the Kalachakra in general.
- 2 *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 443), vol. Ca, f. 154a6.
- 3 The *Chakrasamvara Abridged Tantra* (Toh. 368, vol. Ka) is considered to be the *Chakrasamvara Root Tantra*. This citation is found at f. 13a7.
- 4 *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 417 and 418), vol. Nga. This citation is found at f. 19a4 of the Dharma Chakra (Rumtek) edition.

- 5 In the Beijing edition of *IOK*, the *a chung* is missing from under the *ba* in the word *pratyahara*.
- 6 The text speaks of consuming or eating (*za ba*) and seizing (*len pa*), since the objects of the senses are desired and consumed as though being eaten and seized by the senses. Here, the metaphors are applied to the inner images of luminous clarity experienced by pristine awareness. See Taranatha's *Meaningful to Behold: Manual of Instructions on the Indestructible Yoga's Profound Path*, f. 15a5-7.
- 7 Kongtrul's presentation of the six branches is taken from Taranatha's *Meaningful to Behold: Manual of Instructions on the Indestructible Yoga's Profound Path*.
- 8 The three unmoving faculties (*mi g.yo gsum ldan*) are those of body, speech, and mind. The first, the body unmoving (*lus mi g.yo ba*), refers mainly to the eyes, held in a relaxed and natural way, focused in space at a level above the eyebrows, neither too open nor closed. One assumes the meditation posture and abandons all other physical activities. For the second, unmoving speech (*ngag mi g.yo ba*), one applies the essential points regarding speech as explained in the instructions of the three isolations. For the third, unmoving mind (*yiid mi g.yo ba*), one applies the essential points regarding mind in accordance with the instructions of the three isolations. One focuses the mind sharply on the obscurity of space at the level where the eyes are focused, and remains without thoughts (a summary of Taranatha's *Meaningful to Behold: Manual of Instructions on the Indestructible Yoga's Profound Path*, ff. 11b7-12b3).
- 9 The term "two passages" (*bgrod pa gnyis*) refers to what appears as the movement of the sun towards south (*lho bgrod*) and its movement towards the north (*byang bgrod*). One passage begins on the winter solstice and corresponds to the ascending phase of the solar energy; the other begins on the summer solstice and corresponds to the ascending phase of the lunar energy. These phases are known as passages toward the south and the north because during the six months between one solstice and the other, winter and summer, when observing the sunrise everyday from a given point, one has impression that the point from where the sun rises shifts day by day toward the south or north.
- 10 This possibly refers to the monthly cycle of the vital essence (*khams 'pho ba*) moving into the places of the elemental energy (*bla*) of one's body. In this cycle, the vital essence in males (starting from the first day of the new moon) ascends from the left foot to the crown of the head, where it remains during the fifteenth day of the waxing moon. Then, it gradually descends to the left foot, where it remains during the thirtieth of the lunar month. In females, the vital essence begins its cycle from the right foot. See Gyalwa Yang-gönpa's *Secret Description of the Vajra Body*, ff. 28b3-29b4.
- 11 Time junctures (*dus sbyor, lagna*) refers to the junctures between one zodiac sign and another. The occurrences of junctures correspond to the flowing of the winds through channel-spokes. Each day, the winds flow through the spokes of the twelve main channels at the navel in twelve cycles called transits (*'pho ba*). Each of these transits comprises 1800 respirations (breathing in, the pause within, and breathing out), for a total of 21,600 daily breaths, corresponding to the external motion of the sun, which transits the twelve houses of the zodiac every day. These transits are called junctures. "Even and uneven transits" refers to their transits in the sixty-four channels of the navel

channel-wheel, which at times take place in two channels, and at other times, in three, four, and so on. See also Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), p. 438, n. 24.

- 12 See above, Chapter 6, n. 33.
- 13 Thirty-six psychophysical constituents (*phung kham sum cu so drug*): the six aggregates (forms, feelings, recognitions, mental formations, consciousnesses, and pristine awarenesses); the six elements (earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness); the six sense powers (eye sense power, ear sense power, nose sense power, tongue sense power, body sense power, and mental sense power); their six objects (visible forms, sounds, odors, tastes, tangible objects, and mental phenomena); the six action faculties (mouth faculty, arms faculty, legs faculty, anus faculty, urinary faculty, and regenerative faculty); and their six activities (speaking, taking, going, discharging feces, discharging urine, and emitting seminal fluid) (Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, English translation, p. 172).
 These thirty-six, in their pure state, are the thirty-six deities of the Kalachakra mandala. Each branch of the sixfold yoga, as explained in this text, purifies a group of six of those constituents.
- 14 Each of the six groups is named according to the group's element. The group associated with the branch of withdrawal is called the pristine-awareness-element group; that associated with the branch of meditative absorption, the space-element group, and so on.
- 15 The power of the words of truth (*bden tshig*) means that the words one speaks come true. As for fruitions of mantras (*sngags 'bras*), Nagarjuna, in writing of the benefits of the branch of withdrawal (*sor sdud*), states that the yogin absorbed in withdrawal (i.e., focused on the transcendent path that implements the three types of conduct, elaborate, etc.), as he enjoys all objects, is blessed by all "mantras," which means by all buddhas, who encourage him and declare that he is the very nature of a buddha (Nagarjuna's *Large Commentary on the Eighteenth Chapter [of the Guhyasamaja Tantra]*, f. 312a5-6). See also Taranatha's *Meaningful to Behold*, f. 17a1; and Naropa, *Iniziazione Kalacakra* (in Italian), trans. R. Gnoli and G. Orofino, p. 218.
- 16 The purified six constituents manifest as the six deities Vajrasattva, Prajñāpāramitā, Samantabhadra, Śabdavajra, Śumbharāja, and Raudrākṣi. See Naropa's *Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation* (Toh. 1351), vol. Na, ff. 288b4-289a3; Naropa, *Iniziazione Kalacakra* (in Italian), trans. R. Gnoli and G. Orofino, pp. 77, 369-370.
- 17 The branch of meditative absorption is accompanied by five qualities: intelligence (*shes rab, prajñā*), examination (*rtog pa, vitarka*), analysis (*dpyod pa, vicāra*), joy (*dga' ba, nandā*), and bliss (*bde ba, sukha*). Intelligence means to be fully absorbed in the ten signs of luminous clarity. Examination consists in knowledge of the characteristics of the empty forms, which have the aspects of phenomena, while experiencing such characteristics as being simply mind nature. Analysis is the ascertainment or experience of mind nature manifesting as empty forms, free from dualistic concepts of subject and object. Joy is the mental pleasure, focused outward, that arises as a result of contemplation, and is likened to an unprecedented sense of comfort. Bliss arises as a

result of contemplation, is focused inward, and is experienced as contemplation itself manifests as bliss. This is an unshakeable bliss (*mi g.yo ba'i bde ba*), which causes the body to be pervaded by a special refined bliss.

In this branch of yoga, all of the images of the three realms of existence, included in the ten signs and seen in the yoga of withdrawal, become clearer. The multicolored images of various forms, sounds, odors, tastes, and tactile sensations manifest in spheres of light with the five qualities of being radiant, subtle, shining, vibrating, and difficult to destroy. Within these spheres, many buddhas are seen. These are realized to be manifestations of mind nature. Eventually all karmic appearances are understood as illusions (a summary of Taranatha's *Meaningful to Behold*, ff. 19b1-20a5).

- 18 Five kinds of clairvoyance (*mngon shes lnga*): divine eye, divine ear, recollection of previous lives, knowledge of others' minds, and miraculous powers.
- 19 The purified six constituents manifest as the six deities Akṣobhya, Vajradhātviśvarī, Vajrapāṇi, Dharmadhātuvajra, Uṣṇīṣachakravartin, and Atinilā.
- 20 According to some descriptions, the three channels—left (*lalanā*), right (*rasanā*), and central (*avadhūti*)—have positions below the navel that differ from those above the navel. Below the navel, the left channel bends to the center to become the pathway of fecal waste; the right channel bends to the left to become the pathway of urine; and the central channel bends to the right to become the pathway of semen (Naropa, *Iniziazione Kalacakra*, in Italian, trans., Gnoli and Orofino, p. 272). There are, however, contradictory descriptions. For a discussion of the positions, functions, names, and so forth, of the three channels in the Kalachakra system, see Kedrup Norzang Gyatso's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 88b2-7 and 202a3-203b2.
- 21 See above, Chapter 6, n. 33; Chapter 7, n. 46.
- 22 The vajra body, or subtle body, is formed by the triad of channels (*rtsa*), winds (*rlung*), and vital essences (*thig le*).
- 23 This, as specified by Taranatha in *Meaningful to Behold*, enables the yogin to withhold and reverse the movement of the coarse bodhichitta (seminal fluid) (f. 27a2).
- 24 Read *dung* for *rung* (appearing twice in this passage). Kedrup Norzang states that the left and right channels below the navel are known as the feces channel and urine channel, respectively; and the central channel below the navel is known as the channel of descending seminal fluid (Kedrup Norzang Gyatso's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, f. 170a1). See above, Chapter 8, n. 20.
 Kongtrul writes that the right channel, known as *rasana* (*ro ma*), and the left channel, *lalanā* (*rkyang ma*), branch off from the central channel four finger-widths below the navel. They knot themselves around the central channel at the navel and separate again, then join at the kidneys, coming together at the heart region where they knot again around the central channel. At the throat, they form another knot around the central channel. Again they separate and then join at the brahminical aperture at the crown of the head. From there, the right and left channels bend downward. The right enters the right nostril, and the left, the left nostril. Four finger-widths below the navel, after joining the central channel, they extend downward. The lower extremity of the right channel expels menstrual blood in females, and holds and voids fecal

- waste in both males and females. The lower extremity of the left channel in both males and females holds and emits urine. See Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Profound Inner Reality*, ff. 51a7-52a5. See also Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 172-176.
- 25 The purified six constituents manifest as Amoghasiddhi, Tārā, Khagarbha, Sparśavajra, Vighnānthaka, and Ativīryā.
 - 26 Taranatha's *Meaningful to Behold*, from which this section is taken, reads 'dres pa (f. 30a5) in place of IOK's 'brel ba. The translation is made in accordance with *Meaningful to Behold*.
 - 27 The upper and lower winds are the life-sustaining wind and the downward-voiding wind. In this branch, the wind of the central channel itself (i.e., the right and left winds and the life-sustaining and downward-voiding winds, which have already mixed in the six channel-wheels through the yoga of the vase-shaped holdings of breath) is made to dissolve into emptiness by way of entering the vital essence in the central channel (Taranatha's *Meaningful to Behold*, f. 30b2).
 - 28 In the simplest description, the channel-wheels (*'khor lo, cakra*) number four: the navel channel-wheel with sixty-four spokes or "petals," heart channel-wheel with eight spokes, the throat channel-wheel with sixteen spokes, and forehead channel-wheel with thirty-two. Taranatha notes that most Kalachakra commentaries, when discussing the branch of retention, mention only four channel-wheels (*Meaningful to Behold*, f. 30b3). However, since retention has to be accomplished also in relation to the crown-of-the-head channel-wheel, here the meditation has to include five channel-wheels.
 The Kalachakra system in general speaks of six channel-wheels: The channel-wheel at the crown of the head is green in color, with four spokes; the channel-wheel of the forehead, black in color, with sixteen spokes; and the channel-wheel of the throat, red in color, with thirty-two spokes. The spokes of these three channel-wheels resemble the downward ribs of an umbrella. The channel-wheel of the heart is white in color, with eight petals; the channel-wheel of the navel, yellow in color, with sixty-four channels; and the channel-wheel of the secret place, located eight or ten finger-widths below the navel, blue in color, and with six channels. The spokes of these three channel-wheels resemble the upward ribs of an umbrella. The lower part of the central channel, called *shankhini*, is blue in color; the *lalana* and *rasana* below the navel channel-wheel to the secret channel-wheel are black and yellow, respectively (a summary of Taranatha's *Meaningful to Behold*, ff. 35b-37a2). See also Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 172-176.
 - 29 By eliminating physical suffering such as aging and illness, gaining the capacity to use emotional afflictions as the path through understanding their natures, attaining powers such as that of longevity, and not being bound by attachment to sense pleasures, one overcomes, to a certain extent, the so-called "four demons" (*bdud bzhi, catvarimara*)—the demon of the aggregates, of the emotional afflictions, of death, and of self-complacency. Moreover, by means of the dissolution of the ten winds, one gains special strengths related to body, speech, and mind, such as those mentioned in Kalachakrapada's *Oral Tradition*: not feeling hungry despite not having eaten for

some time; digesting well whatever one does eat; not losing vital essence through the downward-voiding wind, thereby increasing the potential for bliss; feeling physical lightness; experiencing the cessation of thoughts; enjoying good health, longevity, balance of the physical constituents, and so forth (a summary of Taranatha's *Meaningful to Behold*, f. 31a3-5).

- 30 The purified six constituents manifest as the six deities Ratnasambhava, Pāṇḍarā, Kṣitigarbha, Rasavajra, Padmāntaka, and Jambhī.
- 31 The purified six constituents manifest as the six deities Amitābha, Māmākī, Lokeśvara, Rūpavajra, Prajñāntaka, and Māminī.
- 32 In a lifetime of one hundred years, the total time taken by the movements of pristine-awareness wind equals three years and three fortnights. If during that period, one were to transform all karmic winds into pristine-awareness wind, one would attain enlightenment. That is the meaning of the Buddha's statement [in the *Kalachakra Tantra*] that "the state of vajra-holder is attained in three years and three fortnights" (*lo gsum phyogs gsum*) (Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, English translation, pp. 180).
- 33 The ten powers are the powers over length of life, mind, necessities, karma, birth, will, aspiration, miracles, knowledge, and pristine awareness. These powers are possessed by a bodhisattva who has attained at least the eighth stage of awakening. See Guenther, trans., *sGam.po.pa. The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, pp. 33-34, for a definition of each power.
- 34 The purified six constituents manifest as Vairocana, Locanā, Sarvanivaraṇaṣṭkam-bhin, Gandhavajra, Yamāntaka, and Stambhinī.
- 35 The path-and-fruition teachings of the Sakya school constitute a vast literature based on the *Vajra Verses* (*Lam 'bras rdo rje tshig rkang*) of Virupa and other instructions of Virupa related to the Hevajra tantra. Virupa is therefore considered the "first guru" of the path-and-fruition tradition and lineage. Those instructions were transmitted by Virupa to Kanha. Eventually, they were received by Drokmi Lotsawa in Tibet (see *The Blue Annals*, trans. Roerich, pp. 204-240; *Luminous Lives: The Story of the Early Masters of the Lam 'Bras Tradition in Tibet*, trans. Cyrus Stearns, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001; *Taking the Result as the Path: The Core Teachings of the Sakya Lamdré Tradition*, trans. C. Stearns, Wisdom, 2006). *Vajra Verses* is to be found in the *Cycle of Teachings of the Path and Fruition of the Glorious Sakya* (*dPal sa skya pa'i lam 'bras kyi chos skor gces btus*).
- 36 Dombipa, also known as Dombi Heruka, is considered to be one of the eighty-four great adepts (*mahasiddhas*) of ancient India. He figures prominently in the lineages of the inner fire. For details of his life, see Taranatha's *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*.
- 37 The "vital essence of spring" (*dpyid kyi thig le*) refers to the white vital essence ("spring") and red vital essence ("vital essence"), located at the head and at the navel, respectively. See below, Chapter 9, section entitled "The Chakrasamvara Completion Phase: The Tradition of Krishna."

As to the meaning of the name "spring" (*dpyid*), it is explained that the indestruc-

tible vital essence (*mi shigs pa'i thig le*) is called “spring” because during springtime plants grow and flowers bloom and all humans become joyful. Similarly, owing to the indestructible vital essence, the innate pristine awareness of bliss and emptiness manifests (Sertok Lozang Tsultrim’s *Presentation of the Stages and Paths of the Indestructible Way*, p. 104).

- 38 The yoga of inner fire (*gtum mo, caṇḍālī*) is the central axis of many systems of the completion phase. It can be applied in various forms and at different levels. The basic method involves the visualization of the red (solar) vital essence of the nature of fire. This vital essence is often imagined as a tiny triangle of fire at the navel or below, but there are many variations. Controlling the outer and inner breath using the technique of the vase-shaped holding of the breath (*bum pa can, kumbhaka*) at the navel, one ignites the fire of the triangle so that its tip reaches the head. In the head is located the main white (lunar) vital essence, which in many practices is visualized as an inverted syllable *ham*. The fire melts the vital essence, which descends through the central channel and gives rise to various degrees of joy as it reaches the different channel-wheels. In the elaborate forms of inner-fire practices, six channel-wheels are visualized.

The practices of inner fire involving visualizations actually belong to the phase of creation, but they are known as the imaginative phase of completion because they serve as the causes for actually entering the phase of completion. These forms of inner fire are indispensable for beginners, but they are also used as enhancement techniques for yogins on the completion phase. See Taranatha’s *Meaningful to Behold*, f. 37a2-b2. See below, Chapter 11, section entitled “The Yoga of Inner Fire.”

- 39 Dombipa is the author of various works on the Hevajra tantra, but none of the works attributed to him is called *Light of Nectar* (*Amṛtaprabhā, bDud rtsi 'od*). The work spoken of here may be the *Sadhana of Yogini Nairatmya* (*Nairātmyayoginīsādhana, bDag med rnal 'byor ma'i sgrub thabs*, Toh. 1305), but we have been unable to verify this. Listed in the Tohoku catalogue is a text called *Light of Nectar of Great Bliss* (*Mahāsukhāmṛtaprabhā, bDe ba chen po'i bdud rtsi'i 'od*, Toh. 1343), attributed to Jnanaratna.
- 40 Among the main disciples of Dombipa were his consort Dombiyogini, Alalavajra, Garbaripa, Jayashri, Rahulavajra, and Durjayachandra. His consort is said to have been a teacher of the famous Krishnacharya. Durjayachandra wrote the *Commentary on Difficult Points [of the Hevajra Tantra]: Kaumudi* (Toh. 1185).
- 41 Saroruhapada (mTsho skyes zhabs), also known as Saroruhavajra and Padmavajra, was a learned master who served as the spiritual mentor of a king. An aged woman who gathered wood for a living advised him to seek the guidance of Anangavajra, a master from a low caste who had attained realization by attending a female swineherd in Oddiyana. Saroruha was introduced to the ultimate meaning by Anangavajra and gained understanding as a result. For details of his life, see Taranatha’s *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*. Saroruha is the author of many works on the Hevajra contained in the Tengyur. Chief among them are his *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 1181) and his *Sadhana of the Glorious Hevajra* (Toh. 1218).
- 42 The phase of creation of the Hevajra tantra includes a yoga known as “meditation in

six branches” (*yan lag drug sgom pa*) or “the hidden six branches” (*yan lag drug sbas pa*). For this, one imagines oneself as the pledge deity (*dam tshig sems dpa’*, *samayasattva*), and at one’s heart, a radiant syllable between sun and moon disks, which transforms into a sphere. Light from the sphere exits through the pores, causing the mandala and the deities to blaze with light. First, the sphere emits black light, then yellow, red, green, blue, and finally, the sixth time, white.

Next, one begins the phase of entering (*’jug pa*) luminous clarity (*’od gsal*). One imagines that as the breath is exhaled and inhaled, the vowels and consonants are emanated and withdrawn. As the letters exit with the breath, their lights purify one’s major and minor signs. Simultaneously, all of the animate and inanimate worlds merge and dissolve into oneself. Nairatmya, Chauri, and the other goddesses of the mandala dissolve into one’s aggregates. Then, one’s aggregates dissolve into the syllable between the sun and moon disks (which symbolizes the three lights or pristine awarenesses) at the heart. These three (syllable, sun, and moon) dissolve into a sphere of light, that sphere dissolves into a flame-like tip, and that tip vanishes into emptiness. This process is described as entering luminous clarity through the reverse sequence because one’s aggregates dissolve in the order opposite to that of their arising (i.e., first forms, then feelings, then recognitions, mental formations, and consciousnesses).

From the state of luminous clarity, in one instant, one manifests in the form of a white Hevajra with one face and two arms. This is the appearance of pristine awareness, a supreme form that is like a reflection in a mirror or a shadow, an illusion, adorned with all the signs of a supreme being. This is the step of “re-emerging” (*ldang ba*) from luminous clarity (a summary of Jalandhara’s *Vajra Lamp: A Brief and Correct Explanation of the Hevajra Sadhana*, Toh. 1237, vol. Nya, ff. 89b5-91b2; Rahulaguhya’s *Sadhana of Hevajra called Luminous*, Toh. 1238, vol. Nya, ff. 111b3-112b5).

- 43 Taranatha mentions Samayavajra (*Dam tshig rdo rje*), also known as Krishnasamayavajra (*Nag po dam tshig rdo rje*), as a contemporary of the tantric masters Jetari and Thagana who lived during the reign of King Mahapala (eleventh century). He is said to have succeeded Durjayachandra as the tantric master in charge of the renowned Vikramashila Monastery. Krishnasamayavajra’s association with the Hevajra is confirmed in Taranatha’s brief account of his life. See Taranatha’s *History of Buddhism in India* (English translation), pp. 290-292; 327. He was also one of the masters of Gö Khugpa Letsé (*’Gos khug pa lhas btsas*).

The Tengyur contains one work under the name Samayavajra, called the *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1841; and three tantric works under the name Krishnasamayavajra: *Commentary on the Mahamaya Tantra* (Toh. 1624); *Sadhana of Kurukulla* (Toh. 1320); and *Treasury of Doha* (Toh. 2301, vol. Zhi).

- 44 Subtle yoga (*phra mo’i rnal ’byor*, *sūksmayoga*); yoga of the vital-essence sphere (*thig le’i rnal ’byor*, *binduyoga*). Here, the meditation on the vital-essence sphere entails visualization of the indestructible vital-essence sphere on the center of a moon at the heart. This sphere, imagined in the shape of a vajra, is engulfed in lights of many colors. The subtle yoga is to visualize a sphere, the size of a mustard seed, on the tip of the nose of the seal and imagine that the entire universe dissolves into that (a summary of Taranatha’s *Hevajra Tantra Esoteric Instructions on the Completion Phase*, pp. 353.1-4). Those descriptions serve as examples of the two types of yogas. There are many variations.

- 45 On successive destruction (*rjes gzbig*), see above, Chapter 7, nn. 33, 34; and Chapter 12, section entitled “The Ultimate: The Great-Seal Completion Phase of Luminous Clarity.”
- 46 Naropa (956-1040) was born in Bengal. As a young man, he was sent to study in Kashmir, a famous place of learning at that time. As a scholar, Naropa first resided at Pulahari and then became the abbot of the famous Nalanda University, where he wrote most of his works. However, dissatisfied with mere learning, and after having experienced some prophetic visions, Naropa set out in search of the hidden yogin Tilopa. After finding Tilopa, he served him for many years and endured various hardships. As a result, Naropa achieved ultimate realization. He is said to have passed away in Zanskar (Ladakh). See H.V. Guenther’s *The Life and Teaching of Naropa*.
- The Hevajra literature in the Tengyur includes a commentary on the Hevajra called *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 1186, vol. Ga), attributed to Yashobhadra (sNyan grags bzang po) (who is the same person as Naropa), as well as Naropa’s *Sadhana of the Glorious Hevajra* (Toh. 1292, vol. Ta), and another work related to Hevajra, Naropa’s *Jewel Light* (Toh. 1342, vol. Ta).
- 47 Marpa (Mar pa lo rtsa ba) (1012-1097), also known as Marpa Chökyi Lodrö (Mar pa chos kyi blo gros), the most renowned student of Naropa, was a lay yogin and famous translator of tantric works. Marpa is considered to be a forefather of the Kagyu school (*bka’ bryud pa*). For details of his life, see Tsang Nyön Heruka’s *The Life of Marpa the Translator* (English translation).
- 48 Mixing (*bsre ba*) and transference (*’pho ba*) are terms used in all of Marpa’s instructions on the completion phase. Here, they specifically refer to Marpa’s teaching known as “the mixing and transference instructions of the Hevajra,” as found in, for example, Taranatha’s *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*.
- 49 Training with regard to forms (*rnam pa la bsrab pa*) means to develop a clear visualization (*gsal snang*) of the deity. One arranges a painting of the deity, practices the sadhana of Hevajra or that of Nairatmya, and at the end, dissolves the retinue deities of the mandala. One imagines oneself as the single central deity while looking at the painting. Then, one covers the painting and continues the meditation on oneself as the deity. In that way, one alternates between looking at the painting and developing the visualization of oneself as the deity. This is done for two daytime sessions. In the remaining sessions, whether the visualization is clear or not, at some points, one applies oneself to sharpening the clarity, at other points, to cutting thoughts, and at others, to feeling the pride of being the nature of the deity, resting the mind in the presence of the deity, and so on. At nighttime, one meditates with no focus at all. These steps should bring about the attainment of clarity of image within six months. To enhance the results, one imagines that various lights dissolve into the painting, and one focuses on that for a long time, without distraction. Then, with closed eyes, one imagines the same for oneself (a summary of Taranatha’s *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, f. 3a7-b5).

Training in the vital-essence sphere (*thig le la bsrab pa*) is carried out as follows: One visualizes oneself as the deity as before. Then, at the tip of the male’s vajra or tip of the female’s lotus, one imagines a sphere of vital essence, shiny and luminous, the size and color as specified in the instructions. From time to time, one relaxes the mind

in an unmodified state. As a result of focusing on the sphere, bliss arises. One draws the sphere upward to the navel, and once one has experienced bliss (*bde ba*) there, one draws it to the heart, to the throat, and to the crown of the head, experiencing bliss at each point. One then focuses on the sphere in the middle of a tetrahedron at the point between the eyebrows; then, at the root of the nose; then, at a point in space four finger-widths from the tip of the nose; then, at eight finger-widths, and so forth, while mixing the movement of thoughts with the sphere. In that way, all phenomena act as aids in enhancing the experience of bliss. This practice is actually part of the completion phase of Hevajra. However, since it is an ancillary practice of the phase of creation, it is called the “subtle sphere of creation” (a summary of Taranatha’s *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, ff. 3b6-4a4).

For the training in the union of creation and completion (*bskyed rdzogs zung ’jug la bslab pa*), once one has gained experience in the meditation on the subtle sphere or experienced bliss and emptiness through another completion-phase method, one makes offerings to the master, contemplates the four boundless qualities and emptiness, and again gives rise to the experience of bliss (as described in the previous paragraph). The appearance aspect of that bliss is gradually transformed into the deity through the steps of visualization of a syllable, insignia, and form of the deity. At this point, one contemplates that the bliss is the form of the deity, and the form of the deity, bliss. As a result of that training, the bliss and form of the deity manifest as a union (a summary of Taranatha’s *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, f. 4a4-b2).

- 50 Longchenpa defines “one’s own body as method” (*rang lus thabs ldan*); and “the body of another as wisdom” (*gzhan lus shes rab*), i.e., the body of an awareness female (*gzhan lus rig ma*), as follows: “One’s own body” (*rang lus*) refers to all completion-phase practices that depend solely on the effort of one’s mind and not on other methods. Examples of one’s own body as method are inner fire (*gtum mo*), illusory body (*sgyu lus*), dream (*rmi lam*), luminous clarity (*’od gsal*), intermediate state (*bar do*), and transference of consciousness (*’pho ba*). “The body of another” (*gzhan lus*) refers to the use of bliss on the path by a yogin who has mastered the crucial points of channels, winds, and vital essences (Longchenpa’s autocommentary on *Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind*, vol. Kha, ff. 21b6-22a2).

For the inner fire (of one’s own body as method), there are preliminary steps and a main practice. The preliminaries include the taking of refuge, developing the mind of awakening, devotion to the master, imagining oneself as the deity, and visualization of a sphere of light (the union of wind and mind), shiny and luminous, the size and color as specified in the instructions, at the mid-point between the eyebrows. Sometimes one focuses very sharply, repeatedly refreshing the clarity; at other times one does the visualization once and then lets the mind relax in its natural state for a long time. One then imagines that the sphere moves between different points in the body, as described in the instructions. When one has gained some familiarity with that process, one applies it to the practice of the winds. Meditating in this way will definitely produce the experience of bliss and emptiness.

The main practice is based on the principal instructions and assorted instructions for meditation on bliss. The principle instructions consist of three aspects: the instructions of the short *a* (*a thung*) (the “short *a*” refers to the form of an upside-

down *ashé* [*a shad*], a stroke indicating divisions into phrases, verses, etc., of the *lantsa* script); the training in simple blazing and dripping (*'bar 'dzag*); and training in elaborate blazing and dripping.

For the instructions of the short *a*, one trains in the specified wind technique and in various yogic exercises for half a month or so. Then, one combines the wind technique with the visualization. One imagines oneself as the deity, expels impure winds, performs the vase-shaped holding, and visualizes, at a point four finger-widths below the navel in the central channel, the *a*-stroke of inner fire, thumb-size, the blaze of which reaches the navel. Through the force of that contemplation alone, pristine awareness definitely manifests. From that time forward, one alternates between the contemplation of the stroke of inner fire and remaining without thoughts.

For the simple blazing and dripping, one meditates on the *a*-stroke of the inner fire as in the previous, as well as the descent of the vital essence from the crown of the head. The flame of inner fire rises through the central channel to touch and melt the vital essence, which is in the shape of an upside-down syllable *ham*.

For the elaborate blazing and dripping, in addition to the visualization of the *a*-stroke, the *ham* at the crown of the head, and so forth, one also imagines the four channel-wheels along the central channel, with various syllables on their petals. Moreover, there are various inner-fire practices to sustain the bliss (a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, f. 4b4-9b3).

The assorted instructions for meditation on bliss consist of six cycles of visualization to generate bliss. The practice of the inner fire that relies on a seal (an awareness female) entails the same preliminaries as for that of one's own body as method. Ideally, it would be applied when one has already gained some familiarity with the wind practice and inner fire by relying on one's own body as method. Moreover, it requires six preparations, increasing one's physical vitality, seeing things as an illusion, and so on. The main practice consists of the six aspects, such as descent and drawing up of the vital essence and manifesting great pristine awareness (a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, f. 9b3-7).

- 51 The practice of the dream-state illusion (*rmi lam sgyu ma*) consists of developing the conviction that appearances are of the nature of dreams, gaining clarity of dreams, applying methods to recognize dreams as dreams, multiplying dream images, etc., and purifying the dreams.

Developing conviction means that one maintains the awareness that everything is an illusion, understanding that dreams and waking-state appearances do not in any way differ in nature, and thereby being certain that whatever one perceives has no more reality than dreams.

Gaining clarity of dreams entails visualization of a channel-wheel or lotus at the throat with one syllable in the center and a different syllable on each of the four spokes or petals. One focuses the mind on the four syllables for a while and then on the central syllable for a long time. One accompanies this visualization with the aspiration to have many dreams, clear ones, and auspicious ones.

To recognize dreams, before actually falling asleep, one resolves to recognize one's dreams as dreams and repeats the previous visualization. As one moves through the stages of increasing sleepiness up to falling asleep, one focuses on those same syllables. During the daytime, one alternates between visualizing the syllables and relaxing in

the understanding of everything being like a dream. As a result, one will have clear dreams and recognize them as dreams. While the images of the dreams continue to appear, with the certainty that they have no inherent existence, one is able to remain in a state of bliss and emptiness. This is the actual practice in the dream state.

To multiply dream images, or change them in other ways, prior to sleep one visualizes the syllables in one's heart, with the strong conviction that whatever appears is a dream. During the dream one turns a single object into many and then into one; or, one increases the size of the image and then reduces it to its original size. If one dreams of fire, floods, precipices, or other images that cause fear, revulsion, or shame, one imagines that one is simply stamping out the images. If one dreams of obstructions such as mountains, one transforms them into non-obstructive forms. Moreover, with certainty of the illusory nature of things, prior to sleep one makes the wish that in one's dreams one might catch hold of a ray of light and travel to the pure lands to listen to teachings given by buddhas, see tantric deities, meet with masters and dakinis and receive initiation from them, and perform various magical feats such as flying through space. These dreams will occur naturally due to the force of one's wish.

To purify dreams, one continues the visualization of the syllables, with strong conviction that everything is illusion, and suddenly transforms the universe into a mandala and oneself into a deity. As a result, in the dream one will manifest as the form of the deity. While aware that this form is not real, one spontaneously experiences bliss and thereby achieves a state of bliss, emptiness, and clarity of the deity's body. This is the final result of the dream practice (a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, ff. 9b7-12b6).

- 52 For the illusion of the waking state (*sad par gyi sgyu ma*), one applies the general preliminaries as done for inner fire, etc. Then, one focuses for a while on a syllable at the throat. When this visualization is stable, one thinks that all these appearances—the universe and all beings—are without self-nature, like a dream. One mixes that practice with the recollection of the experience of dream illusion and continues to do so for a period of time. One then imagines that all appearances vanish into space, like the fading of a rainbow, and one remains in a state without any thoughts whatsoever. Then, from emptiness, one suddenly manifests as the deity Hevajra or Nairatmya, while viewing all the universe and beings as mandala and deities. If, when deities manifest, they manifest as illusions, that is sufficient. Otherwise, one must continue to train in the conviction that all the deities of the mandala are like illusions. This is done in the post-meditation period as well (a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, ff. 13a2-14a2).
- 53 The instructions concerning the illusion of the intermediate state (*bar do sgyu ma*) (between death and rebirth) have four parts: recognition of the dimension of reality (*dharmakaya*) on the basis of the luminous clarity of death in the first phase of the intermediate state; recognition of the dimension of union on the basis of the illusory body in the second phase of the intermediate state; closing the doors to birth as one of the six types of beings in the third phase of the intermediate state; and choosing the place of birth when one has not been able to close the doors to birth.

The first uses death as the path to recognize the dimension of reality. For this, one visualizes a tetrahedron below the navel, with a lotus inside it. In the center of the

lotus is the inner-fire *a*-stroke and on each of the four petals, a different syllable. One focuses on each syllable in turn, in the clockwise direction and beginning with the one in front, as there arise the signs of one element dissolving into the next, and one imagines that one syllable dissolves into the next. As one focuses on the first, one imagines that the earth element of one's body dissolves into the water element, bringing forth an appearance of clouds; the second, the water element dissolves into fire, bringing forth an appearance of smoke; the third, the fire element dissolves into wind, bringing forth an appearance of fireflies; the fourth, the wind element dissolves into consciousness, bringing forth an appearance of a bright flame; and the central *a*-stroke, consciousness dissolves into space, bringing forth the white, red, and black lights, and finally luminous clarity. One focuses for long time on the *a*-stroke until it vanishes into luminous emptiness, and one remains for a while in that state of emptiness. Then one meditates that one instantaneously appears as Hevajra or Nairatmya, alone or with retinue, and views this display as an illusion. When one has trained in this meditation, one applies it when going to sleep.

For the second, as for the previous, one visualizes the syllables up to the dissolution into luminous clarity, or one simply remains for a while in a nonconceptual state. Then, one regards all that one perceives—oneself and others, the outer world and inner inhabitants—as the appearances of the intermediate state and, with the determination not to be deceived by them, one transforms the entire universe and all beings into the mandala and the main deities, while viewing everything as an illusion. One meditates on all sounds as mantras and regards them also as illusory. Finally, one seals the meditation with bliss and emptiness. In the intervals between formal meditation, one continually aspires to be able to recognize the intermediate state and strengthens the conviction that everything is already the intermediate state. Moreover, one acknowledges that, although at present one is not experiencing the intermediate state, eventually one will definitely experience that state. One resolves that one will, at that time, recognize all appearances as illusions. When the actual intermediate state occurs, one meditates in exactly that way. In short, if one is deceived by present appearances, one will also be deceived in the intermediate state; one therefore resolves not to be deceived by the appearances of everyday life and to recognize the waking state as the intermediate state.

For the third instruction, closing the doors to birth, one applies the instructions for the intermediate state just mentioned as one sees one's own future parents, and one views all males and females as intermediate-state appearances and therefore inappropriate as objects of attachment and aversion. Moreover, one regards all beings as the miraculous display of the pristine awareness of one's master. While visualizing the master as Hevajra in union with consort Nairatmya, one imagines that all males are drawn into Hevajra, and all females, into the consort. One makes offerings and receives the four initiations. In the post-meditation period, all males are viewed as Hevajra, and all females, as consort.

For the fourth instruction, in case one is not successful in the previous, one aspires to be reborn in a place where evil can be avoided and the systems of secret mantra, especially that of Hevajra, practiced. One views one's future parents as one's master Hevajra and consort, receives the four initiations from them, and, as if taking rebirth, dissolves into Hevajra in union (a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, ff.16a6-17b1).

- 54 The fourfold practice of luminous clarity (*'od gsal*) consists of the luminous clarity of the intrinsic nature (*rang bzhin 'od gsal*), the luminous clarity of meditation (*sgom pa'i 'od gsal*), the luminous clarity of sleep (*gnyid kyi 'od gsal*), and the luminous clarity at the time of death (*'chi ba 'od gsal*).

For the first, the luminous clarity of the intrinsic nature, with the knowledge that phenomena have no true existence but are like illusions, and knowing their nature or mode of being to be luminous clarity, one remains in meditation on that nature. Through various steps of meditation, one comes to recognize the luminous clarity that is the natural ground of everything, or *mahamudra*, and to integrate such knowledge into all one's ordinary activities.

The second, the practice of the luminous clarity of meditation, resembles the daytime practice of the first branch of the sixfold yoga, withdrawal (*sor sdud*). With the eyes focused in the space in front, the practitioner brings forth the signs of the dissolution of the elements and the nonconceptual state and naturally produces warmth and bliss. To enhance the results, one visualizes oneself as the deity, in complex or simple form, with the specified syllable above a sun and lotus at the heart. Light radiating from the syllable transforms the entire universe into the mandala. All sentient beings are drawn into oneself and gradually one dissolves into the syllable, which, through the stages of the parts of the syllable dissolving one into the other, finally vanishes into emptiness. In that state, one remains for as long as one can while sustaining the experience from the previous meditation. Then, one visualizes the form of the deity in precise detail. These first two instructions relate to the meditation of luminous clarity during the daytime.

The third, the practice of the luminous clarity of sleep, is twofold: recognizing the luminous clarity of sleep; and mixing sleep with daytime experiences. For the first, in the formal session, one visualizes at one's heart a lotus with one syllable at its center and a different syllable on each of the four petals. In the clockwise direction and starting from the front, one focuses on each syllable dissolving one into the next, one after the other. Then, one holds the mind for long time on the central syllable. It then vanishes and one remains in a state without thoughts. One practices in that way for a month or more, and in that way one may naturally recognize the luminous clarity of sleep. If one does grasp luminous clarity, that is good. If not, in order to gain the power to recognize luminous clarity while sleeping, one must invigorate the body with a good diet and massage for few days, make offerings to the dakinis, and so forth. One focuses again on the syllables, one after the other, and applies the meditation before going to sleep. For the second, mixing sleep with daytime experiences, one arranges a painting of the deity in front of oneself. Resting in a natural state of mind, one looks at the painting for a while. When the image has appeared clearly to the mind, one refreshes one's understanding of its illusion-like nature. Then, one abruptly stops looking at the image and observes directly the nature of the clear mental image. Gradually, the image fades away, revealing the unmodified state of mind. If one has had an experience of bliss and emptiness, one integrates that experience with that unmodified state. One repeats this procedure until proficient. Once proficient, one no longer relies on the painting and trains only on the mental image. While awake, one will be able to manifest as the illusory body of the deity. By meditating in the same way at night, the dissolution of the body of the deity is mixed with the luminous clarity of sleep (a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, ff. 18a1-21b6).

The fourth, the practice of the luminous clarity of death, is identical to that of the recognition of the dimension of reality on the basis of the luminous clarity of death (as explained in the previous note). One first makes the aspiration to be able to transform death into the reality dimension of awakening. Then, as described above, one visualizes a tetrahedron below the navel, a lotus within it, and a different syllable on each petal and the inner-fire *a*-stroke in the center. Each syllable dissolves into the next, and finally the *a*-stroke vanishes into luminous emptiness, and one remains for a while in that state of emptiness. From that state, one arises as the deity with the certainty of the illusory nature of things. Once one is familiar with that procedure, one applies it at night before going to sleep while one's mind is still clear. In addition, both day and night, one resolves to remain in the nonconceptual state of luminous clarity while sleeping and to manifest as the deity in dreams. Furthermore, one aspires to be able to do the same at the time of death and refines one's training in both deep sleep and dream. In that way, one definitely grasps the luminous clarity of death (a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, ff. 14a5-16a5).

- 55 The upward transference of consciousness (*gong du 'pho ba*) has two parts: the transference that one trains in (*shyangs te 'pho ba*); and the transference of consciousness in a forceful way (*btsan thabs su 'pho ba*) at the time of death.

For the first, there are two parts, the preparations and the actual practice. The preparations entail training in the vase-shaped holding of the breath (of the lesser, middling, and superior types) and blocking the orifices or "gateways" through which consciousness can exit by visualizing syllables at the gateways. One visualizes a syllable at each of both eyes, on the crown of the head, between the eyebrows, at both ears and nostrils, the mouth, urethra, and anus, and a column of syllables standing at the navel, as well as a column of syllables standing at the throat, the heart, and both shoulders. The different syllables and their colors are as specified in the instructions. The tops of the syllables face inside the body, which is viewed as an empty shell. One imagines that light radiating from the syllables blocks all gateways, and simultaneously one applies the technique of the vase-shaped holding of the breath. For the actual practice of transference, one visualizes at the level of the navel a syllable that is the symbol of one's consciousness. Then, though various steps of the meditation and the breath-control technique, one projects that syllable up to the crown of the head, from where it emerges slightly. The actual practice to be applied at the time of death (but which needs to be familiarized with prior to death) differs in that the syllable is actually projected into the heart of the deity.

The transference of consciousness in a forceful way (*btsan thabs su 'pho ba*) is to be applied when one has been stricken by a mortal illness and has not trained in the above transference method. For this, one gives up attachment to what one is leaving behind and sets oneself in a positive frame of mind, engaging in virtuous deeds, giving away all one's possessions, etc. One then applies the procedure for the transference of one's consciousness by forcefully inducing pristine awareness (*ye shes btsan thabs su bskyed pa*), which entails sitting upright and focusing on a white sphere between the eyebrows as one performs specific physical exercises. In another method, called transference by means of a focus in a forceful way (*dmigs pas btsan thabs su 'pho ba*), one visualizes the master or deity in front. In one's heart, in the center of a lotus with four petals, is a letter that represents one's mind. As one utters the specified sound twenty-

- one times, one imagines that the letter exits from the crown of the head and enters the heart of the master or deity where it dissolves (a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, ff. 21b6-24a7).
- 56 For the transference of consciousness called entering the deceased (*grong du 'jug pa*), the practitioner must have realized the nature of phenomena as illusion, have gained clarity of visualization in the creation phase, be proficient in the wind practices, and have received permission to do this transference from a dakini or deity. To perform this, one needs to prepare various articles, which are placed in a mandala, elaborate or simple. Through this practice, one's adherence to the notion of a self and attachment to oneself are reduced or eliminated. The signs of blazing, shaking, and warmth manifest, the perception of one's body becomes unclear, and so forth, which are signs that one has become proficient in the training (a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, ff. 24a7-25a6).
- 57 The Hevajra literature contained in the Dergé Tengyur includes three works (Toh. 1243, 1244, and 1308) attributed to Avadhutipa, who is also known as Maitripa and Advayavajra. The Tengyur's first commentary in the cycle of the Hevajra is Toh. 1180, one of the three *Commentaries by the Bodhisattvas* (see Chapter 1, n. 12). This work is generally attributed to Vajragarbha, whose identity is uncertain, and may in fact have been composed by Maitripa.
- 58 Shavaripa, also known as Saraha the Younger, was an accomplished master who demonstrated that he possessed miraculous powers. According to some accounts, he was a hunter who was converted by the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. Taranatha writes that he was one of three children of a dance teacher. He met Nagarjuna at a early age and then acted as a hunter once he had attained realization. From him stems one of the most renowned lineages of the great seal, which includes masters such as Luipa, Dengipa, Tilopa, and Naropa. See Taranatha's *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*.
- 59 Marpa the Translator, known as the Venerable One of Lhodrak as he was originally from Lhodrak in southern Tibet, relied for a long time on Maitripa as one of his main masters. From him Marpa received teachings on the root and explanatory Hevajra tantras, the Buddhakapala tantra, and the *Instruction on the Four Seals* (*Phyag rgya bzhi'i gdams ngag*) (Toh. 2295).
- 60 The full title of the teachings referred to here as "cycles of nine paths" (*lam dgu skor*), or "nine sets of the profound path" (*lam zab dgu phrugs*), is the "nine paths of the completion phase of the Hevajra" (*dgyes pa rdo rje la rdzogs rim lam dgu skor*). The essence of it is contained in Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*.
- 61 Here, the practice of the inner fire comprises the preliminaries and the actual inner fire. The first entails training in the winds, which can be done in an extensive or concise way. There are specific instructions for the flow of the breath, numbers of the breaths, training with regard to color and shape of breath, and so on. For the actual practice of inner fire, there are methods based on one channel-wheel, two channel-wheels, and four. The single channel-wheel visualization is that of a red-hot *a*-stroke at the navel, combined with the vase-shaped holding of the breath. The two chan-

nel-wheel practice is to visualize the *a*-stroke at the navel within a tetrahedron and the inverted syllable at the top of the head. The heat of the *a*-stroke melts the syllable, whose essence descends through the central channel. The four channel-wheel practice entails visualization of all four channel-wheels, as in the practice of inner fire explained above, as well as the left channel, closed by a garland of red consonants, and the right channel, closed by a garland formed of two sets of white vowels. As the inner fire blazes, all channel-wheels are pervaded by fire, melting the syllable at the top of the head. For the most part, this practice of inner fire is the same as that explained in the Mahamaya completion phase (see Chapter 10, section entitled “Mahamaya Completion Phase”; and Chapter 10, n. 35) and in Taranatha’s *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, ff. 26b2-28b5.

- 62 The instructions on the seals are threefold: practice with an action seal; practice with an imaginary seal; and meditation on one’s own body as bliss.

Practice with an action seal (*las kyi phyag rgya, karmamudrā*) should be learned from such manuals as the *Three Crucial Points of Instruction on Another’s Body* (*gZhan lus kyi gdams ngag gnad gsum mā*), *Notes* (*Yig chung tshig bcad ma*), and *Large Manual* (*gZhan lus kyi yi ge che ba*). There are no separate instructions for this practice stemming from Maitripa that differ from those of Naropa as found in the context of mixing and transference. However, there are differences in the applications according to various accomplished adepts. According to Nagarjuna and Shavaripa, the action seal and imaginary seal are connected. Indrabhuti says that all four seals are fulfilled in the action seal alone. Thus, the action seal is an independent path. Holding the mind on the sphere is the seal of phenomena; mind manifesting as bliss, the pledge seal; and the spontaneous arising of the nonconceptual state, the great seal (a summary of Taranatha’s *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, ff. 28b5-30a2).

The imaginary seal (*yiḍ kyi phyag rgya*) generally refers to the visualization of oneself as the male and female deities in union. One imagines that from the contact of two syllables arises bliss. If one has already had a stable experience of bliss generated with an actual consort or by means of inner fire, at that time the bliss will actually be experienced. With mind totally immersed in that bliss, to the exclusion of everything else, all extraneous appearances cease, and there arises only bliss. As one continues to do this practice, one will experience the bliss sealing all appearances and all appearances serving as aids to bliss (a summary of Taranatha’s *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, f. 29a6-b2).

For the meditation on one’s own body as bliss (*rang lus bde bar sgom pa*), once the bliss dependent on an action seal or imaginary seal has arisen, one simply rests in the nature of that bliss, without attempting to modify anything. As a result of this, clarity and bliss will be sealed by nonconceptuality and emptiness. One then meditates on all forms and sounds as bliss. This is what is meant by meditation on one’s body as bliss (a summary of Taranatha’s *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, ff. 29b3-30a2).

- 63 Read *gsum* for *gnyis*.

- 64 These three instructions are all related to training in the ground of all (*kun gzhi la bslab pa*).

The first instruction is called “unifying the dispersed [aspects of] the ground of all” (*kun gzhi ’thor ba sdud pa*). For that, one focuses the mind on a tiny sphere at the heart, between the eyebrows, or at the sex organ, and brings forth a nonconceptual state on the basis of imagination, according to the instructions (a summary of Taranatha’s *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, f. 30a2-b6).

The second instruction is called “using the manifestations of the ground of all as the path” (*kun gzhi snang ba lam khyer*) and also known as “opening the gate to self-blessing” (*rang byin rlabs kyi sgo dbye ba*). It should be preceded by an introduction through which the master elicits pristine awareness in the student. The actual practice involves three aspects: (1) understanding the characteristics of the great seal or *mahamudra* (being all-pervasive; immaterial, free from coming, staying, and going; and unchanging); (2) understanding the four commitments (since there is no object to be abandoned, cyclic existence has never existed; since there is no remedy to be applied, there is no adherence to liberation as peace; since there is no awakening outside oneself, there is freedom from hoping for a result; and since the nature of reality is beyond conceptual fixations, there is no meditation performed by the mind); and (3) understanding the means of meditation on the first two points. As to how the characteristics of the great seal and the four commitments, which cannot be grasped by means of words alone, are to be realized, they must be revealed by a qualified master using one’s own mind as an example. The essence of the practice is to rest the mind in its natural state, in meditative equipoise on the reality that is devoid of coming and going. One gains understanding, first, that mind is unborn; in the middle, that thoughts are incidental; and in the end, that they dissolve into the nature that is beyond effort. Thus, by recognizing the ineffable and incidental nature of manifestations, one is able to use manifestations as the path to realization. See Taranatha’s *Hevajra Tantra, Marpa Tradition, Manual of Instructions*, ff. 30b6-31b1.

The instructions called the “inconceivable ground of all” (*kun gzhi bsam mi khyab*) consist in placing the mind in its natural state, without attempting to modify in any way the appearances of the five sense consciousnesses but simply maintaining the clarity of pure and total presence. Whatever thoughts or activities arise, one remains in a state of pure presence, without acceptance or rejection. Thus, having unified the dispersed aspects of the ground of all and having used manifestations of the ground of all as the path, one remains in the inconceivable ground of all (*ibid.*, f. 31b1-4).

- 65 Vyadali, a hunter of birds, is said to have one day noticed a parrot taking fruit with its beak. He followed the path of the parrot as it departed and as a result discovered the master who became his teacher, the younger Virupa or Kala Virupa (a disciple of Virupa). It is said that after twelve years of contemplation, Vyadali attained ultimate realization. He eventually became the teacher of Kuslibhadra in a transmission of the instructions of inner fire. See Taranatha’s *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*.

No work attributed to him is to be found in the Hevajra literature in the Tengyur. However, several works written by him are found in the Tengyur, one being a text on alchemy (Toh. 4313).

- 66 For the practice that causes the mind to abide in the central channel, one begins by meditating on emptiness and then imagining that in the empty space in front appears one’s own master as Hevajra, seated on a throne, in the middle of an infinite bud-

dha realm. One makes supplications, takes refuge, and imagines offering articles, after which the master Hevajra and the retinue of bodhisattvas melt into light, enter one's nostrils, and descend to the heart. One then appears as the deity. A central channel, the characteristics and color as described in the instructions, runs from the top of the head to the secret place. Inside the channel, at the level of the heart, is a sphere of light, the indivisibility of one's mind and the mind of one's master. That sphere, white, sits inside a multicolored tetrahedron and emits light of five colors. One focuses on that for some time. Then, all appearances melt and are absorbed into oneself, one's form dissolves into the central channel, and so on, through the steps of the instructions, until one remains in a nonconceptual state. Repeating that meditation many times is the method for achieving the abiding of mind (a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra Esoteric Instructions on the Four Seals of the Completion Phase*, pp. 407.1-410.3).

There are six crucial elements that affect the winds entering the central channel: the crucial element of external factors (i.e., the body); internal factors, the channels; the time; the sphere; the winds; and the focus of meditation. To apply those six elements, one imagines that the master, in the form of light, enters one's heart (as described in the previous paragraph). One assumes the physical posture and eye-focus described in the instructions. One's body is imagined as the deity. In the central channel is a tetrahedron, within which is a radiant white sphere. As one focuses on that and repeats the specified syllables mentally and occasionally verbally, one applies the breath-control technique. One imagines that the winds of the four elements, the essences of the life-sustaining wind and the downward-voiding wind, in the form of five-colored light, enter the central channel and dissolve into the sphere. All of the universe and beings dissolve into oneself, and eventually everything dissolves into luminous clarity. During the daytime, one visualizes the sphere within a tetrahedron at the mid-point between the eyebrows and at the heart, for equal lengths of time. At night, one visualizes it at the heart and at the secret place, for equal lengths of time. As a result, the right and left winds enter the central channel, and so on. The precise instructions for such practices, as well as enhancement techniques, ways to avert obstacles, etc., should be learned directly from a master at the appropriate time (a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra Esoteric Instructions on the Four Seals of the Completion Phase*, pp. 410.4-412.4).

- 67 The natural inner fire (*rang bzhin gyi gtum mo*) mentioned here is the uninterrupted blazing of the fire of pristine awareness and the repeated melting bliss in the central channel brought about by the three elements—mind, the empty form of the deity, and winds (those three having already merged)—merging with the vital essence. See Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra Esoteric Instructions on the Four Seals of the Completion Phase*, p. 421.1-3).
- 68 In this context, the subtle yoga (*phra mo'i rnal 'byor, sūksmayoga*) is understood as various forms of practice related to the winds, which involve breathing techniques in addition to the application of physical yogas. These serve the purposes of mixing and controlling the life-sustaining wind and the downward-voiding wind, bringing the winds into the central channel, and releasing the knots of the channels. See Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra Manual of Instructions on the Four Principles of the Completion Phase*, pp. 383.1-388.6.

- 69 Here, the vital-essence yoga (*thig le'i rnal 'byor*) comprises five minor visualizations: For the first, one visualizes one's own body as deity with consort and focuses the mind on a vital-essence sphere at the channels at the point of union. For the second, one focuses on the *a*-stroke at the navel, accompanied by the strong conviction that all phenomena are like illusions. To focus in those ways will direct winds into the central channel and produce the experience of the illusory nature of appearances. For the third, one focuses the mind on a radiant syllable in the heart. Continuous meditation in this way causes one to experience a nonconceptual state during the day and a state of luminous clarity at night. For the fourth, one imagines a radiant red syllable at the throat. When this is accompanied by a strong conviction of the illusory nature of things, during the day there will arise various experiences of illusion and at night the body of the deity will manifest spontaneously in dreams as the union of appearances and emptiness. For the fifth, one focuses on an inverted syllable *ham* at the crown of the head while bringing to mind the bliss elicited by the wisdom consort. To meditate in this way will develop and stabilize the bliss.

Moreover, by means of this yoga, one will accomplish all one's aims and enhance the practice of the inner fire. The inner-fire practice in this context has two aspects: the four-channel-wheel practice; and the two-channel-wheel practice. The first involves visualization of various syllables at the four channel-wheels, and the syllable of the inner fire at the navel. Applying the vase-shaped holding of the breath, one causes the inner fire to blaze and the vital essence in the head to melt. For the second, one visualizes two channel wheels, the forehead or crown and the navel, plus the three main channels, and the blazing and melting as before. This practice constitutes the vital-essence yoga that is the stage of the pledge seal (a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra Manual of Instructions on the Four Principles of the Completion Phase*, pp. 388.7-391.6).

- 70 Read *thabs ldan* for *babs ldan*.

- 71 The characteristics of an action seal are clearly elucidated in the tantra. The practice requires preliminaries such as the generation of the deity, viewing everything as illusion, and so forth. The main practice is to train in the five sense pleasures and the descent, holding, reversal, and spread of the vital-essence in the body, and so forth. When one can do the same in one's imagination, one has stabilized the bliss (a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra Manual of Instructions on the Four Principles of the Completion Phase*, p. 392.1-7).
- 72 When one has developed bliss to the fullest with the imaginary seal, as one remains in nonconceptual meditation, there will arise a continuous experience of bliss and emptiness related to the melting bliss, even when one does not rely on an external, secondary cause. Then, one directs the mind to something pleasing—a color, sound, etc.—and to the delight that arises from it. Subsequently, whenever one encounters the same color or sound, that feeling of delight arises. After training in that way, one focuses on a variety of objects—friends, enemies, and persons towards whom one feels indifference, pleasant and unpleasant things, and so on. Whatever appears has the capacity to increase bliss. All phenomena act as a seal; and therefore, one speaks of the “seal of phenomena.” The stage of the seal of phenomena is the point at which, in all activities, such as eating, walking, and sitting, bliss arises as an uninterrupted stream

(a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra Manual of Instructions on the Four Principles of the Completion Phase*, pp. 391.7-392.6).

- 73 For this practice, one performs the preliminaries, from the clearing of the residual breath onward, in a dark and isolated dwelling. One adopts the lotus posture, places the hands in meditation mode, focuses the eyes as specified in the instructions, and so forth. By gaining familiarity with those steps, one manifests the five signs, spheres of light, and various images of the three worlds. One practices until those visions become stable and continuous, at which point one remains in contemplation with the mind focused on them. Then, while the various images of the mind arise and vanish, one realizes that they are all beyond the nature of the ground-of-all consciousness (a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra Manual of Instructions on the Four Principles of the Completion Phase*, pp. 393.6-397.5).
- 74 Shantigupta, a student of Jnanamitra and other tantric masters, was born in Jalamandala. He first became a monk in Giava under the tutorship of Ratigupta. Serving the master for many years, Shantigupta received, besides the common teachings, extensive tantric instructions. Dissatisfied with monastic life, he left to become a wandering yogin. A female liquor-vendor advised him to seek the guidance of Jnanamitra. Upon meeting Jnanamitra, he endured many hardships while seeking instructions from him and being continually refused. Finally, on one occasion, while he was acting as the assistant in a fire rite being performed by Jnanamitra, Shantigupta made a minor error. As a consequence, his master hurled burning coals at him. That event triggered in Shantigupta an awakening of inconceivable pristine awareness. Thereafter, he became absorbed in the work of transmitting his understanding to others, bestowing instructions in a nonconceptual way. According to Taranatha, whose master, Buddhagupta, was a student of Shantigupta, this outstanding master was a holder of all tantric instructions and an adept whose realization was higher than that of even the saintly Naropa. See Taranatha's *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*.
- 75 These teachings are found in the nine path-cycles (*lam dgu skor*): the teachings of Virupa contained in the cycle of essential instructions of the *Vajra Verses*, together with the *Path and Fruition*, based on the Hevajra tantra; Saroruha's cycle of the *Nine Profound Practices of the Creation Phase* (*bsKyed rim zab mo tshul dgu*) and the *Completion Phase Like the Tip of a Flame* (*rDzogs rim mar me rtse mo lta bu*), also based on the Hevajra; Nagarjuna's cycle of *Commentary on Bodhichitta* (*Byang chub sems 'grel gyi lam skor*), based on the Guhyasamaja; Dombipa's cycle of *Establishing the Innate* (*lHan cig skyes grub kyi lam skor*), based on the Hevajra; Indrabhuti's cycle of the *Complete Path of the Seal* (*Phyag rgya lam yongs su rdzogs pa'i lam skor*), based on the Jnanatilaka tantra; Kuddalipada's cycle of the *Inconceivable* (*bSam mi khyab kyi lam skor*), based on the Samputa; Krishna's cycle of *Olapati* (*O la pa ti lam skor*), based on the Chakrasamvara; Vagishvara's cycle of the *Great Seal Without Letters* (*Phyag chen yig ge med pa'i lam skor*), based on the Guhyasamaja; Krishnamaravajra's cycle of *Straightening the Crooked* (*Yon po srong ba'i lam skor*), based on all mother tantras. These transmissions were all received by the translator Drokmi Sakya Yeshé (993-1050), who received them from Gayadhara and Viravajra.
- 76 The instructions for Shantipa's system of the completion phase of the *Innate Yoga* are contained in Taranatha's *Commentary on the Yoga of the Innate, a Teaching on*

the Completion Phase of Hevajra, by Ratnakarashanti. Ratnakarashanti's *Yoga of the Innate* is Toh. 1246.

- 77 Shri Sattvanatha seems to be another name of Shantigupta. The esoteric instructions of Shri Sattvanatha called the *Single Lamp Manual of Instructions on the Hevajra Completion Phase* (*sGron ma gcig pa/ Kye rdo rje'i rdzogs rim sgron ma gcig pa'i kbrid yig ye shes rab gsal*) appear as a kind of appendix (see *Collected Works*, vol. 9, pp. 371.6-377.6) in Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra Esoteric Instructions on the Completion Phase*, which comprises several smaller instructions on the practice of the Hevajra completion phase.

The practice of the *Single Lamp* has a foundation consisting of five aspects: First, one remains totally focused on the manifestation of oneself as the form of the deity. This is the contemplation of the body vajra. When that is stabilized, one applies the contemplation of the speech vajra, which means to remain absorbed in simple presence, the essence of one's own mind. When that is stabilized, one applies the contemplation of the mind vajra, which is to focus the eyes in space in front. When that is stabilized, one performs the undivided vajra yoga, which means to leave aside any focus and remain without any thoughts. After that is the meditation of the five-spoked mind-wheel, for which one remains in the state of mere awareness, without thoughts, while focusing intensely on the essence of apparent phenomena, clearly imagining one's body as Heruka, inseparable from emptiness, and generating compassion for all beings, illusory in nature. Those five aspects are performed over and over again, like the spinning of a wheel. When one is able to enter and arise from those contemplations, which are related to the five pristine awarenesses, one simply remains in luminous emptiness while the energy of the mind manifests unceasingly.

The next, and final, aspect of the *Single Lamp* practice is performed in alternation with those five aspects. Whatever manifests is realized as primordially empty. For the actual practice, there are six parts, of which the first three are preparations (striking the crucial points related to the heart; striking the crucial points related to the lower tip of the central channel; and applying the yoga of the river current on the basis of the indestructible vital essence); and the last three, the main practices (bliss; emptiness; and great bliss). The first of the six consists of meditation on the inner fire involving visualization of the four channels, with a white syllable at the head and a red one at the navel. The second is the practice of inner fire through which all the channels of the body are pervaded and purified by light, eliciting the four joys. The third is to visualize oneself as the deity with a syllable at the heart, radiant with light that dissolves the whole universe and beings. Oneself as the deity dissolves into the syllable, which then dissolves into emptiness. Then one arises instantly as the deity. This is practiced in conjunction with the four empties and the four blisses. The fourth stabilizes, by means of the meditation of the innate, the pristine awareness gained from the previous step, through application of the pledge seal, pristine-awareness seal, and action seal, whereby the body of the deity concretely manifests from the mere bliss of the indivisibility of wind and mind (i.e., the arising of the illusory body). The fifth, when one has achieved a continuous manifestation of that deity body, is to dissolve that body into emptiness and thereby realize mind nature in which all fabricated appearances have vanished into space, without center or boundary. The sixth is to arise from that state, like the flash of a fish as it springs from water, manifesting

the entire mandala. Then, by applying the tantric activities, one attains the final result (a summary of Taranatha's *Hevajra Tantra Esoteric Instructions on the Completion Phase*, pp. 371.6-377.7).

CHAPTER 9: MOTHER TANTRA SYSTEMS: CHAKRASAMVARA

- 1 Luipada (in some texts spelled Luyipada and Luhipada), also known as Eater of Fish Entrails (Nya lto pa), or Beggar of Food (bSod snyoms pa), ranks close to the first recognized tantric master, Saraha, and is the fourth master in the lineage of Saraha, after Nagarjuna and Shavari. While serving as a scribe for Oddiyana's king, one day he happened to overhear Shavari chanting songs of realization. Greatly inspired by the words, he immediately departed for Bengal, where he spent twelve years in meditation, subsisting on a hardly more than a mound of fish entrails, until he understood the nature of reality. His two renowned students, Darika and Dengipa, king and minister of Orissa, he guided to awakening by using drastic means in order to destroy their fixations. Luipa holds a place of great importance in the transmission of the tantras. From him stems a lineage of Chakrasamvara that is widespread even now among Tibetan tantric practitioners. Taranatha places him in the lineage of *mahamudra* (the great seal). See Taranatha's *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*.

Two works on the Chakrasamvara tantra contained in the Dergé Tengyur are attributed to him: *Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord* [*Chakrasamvara*] (Toh. 1427) and *Sadhana of the Glorious Vajrasattva* (Toh. 1454).

- 2 *Chakrasamvara Abridged Tantra* (Toh. 368).
- 3 The female-emissary path (*pho nya'i lam*) refers to practice with an action seal. This is to be learned directly from a master. The yoga path (*rnal 'byor lam*) comprises the great yoga, wind recitation, and vajra recitation (see Chapter 9, nn. 7, 8, 9). In Viravajra's *Commentary on [Luipa's] Sequence of Visualization of Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1512, vol. Zha, f. 340a6), these two approaches are called, respectively, the path of attachment (*chags lam*) and the liberative path (*grol lam*). On the female emissary, see Chapter 9, n. 19.
- 4 Here, the name Abhayakirti ('Jigs med grags pa) refers to the second oldest of the four Pamtingpa brothers of Nepal (*bal po pham thing pa*). Known simply as Pamtingpa, and also as A-ngepa Chenpo (A nges pa chen po, which may be a corrupt transcription of A des pa), he studied with Naropa for nine years, in particular the tantric teachings of Hevajra and Chakrasamvara, and is said to have achieved realization through the practice of Chakrasamvara. Dharmamati, his older brother, called by some the "Great Pamtingpa," studied with Naropa for twelve years.

Malgyo Lotsawa (Mal gyo lo tsa ba), also known as Malgyo Lotsawa Lodrö Drakpa (Blo gros grags pa), received the Chakrasamvara initiation and meditation instructions from A-ngepa Chenpo when the latter visited Tibet. Later, Malgyo Lotsawa journeyed to Nepal and became very knowledgeable in the complete Chakrasamvara cycle as a student of A-ngepa Chenpo and his younger brother Bodhibhadra, who had also studied under Naropa. Malgyo Lotsawa transmitted his instructions to Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (Sa chen kun dga' snying po), from whom is derived the teachings propagated in the Sakya school. See *The Blue Annals*, trans. Roerich, pp. 380-382.

5 The three gatherings (*bsdu ba gsum*)—the gathering of vajra beings (*rdo rje sems dpa' bsdu ba*); gathering of syllables (*yi ge bsdu ba*); and gathering of vital essences (*thig le bsdu ba*)—are discussed below in Chapter 9, n. 7, 8, 9.

6 Read *mtshan don* for *mtshon don*, in accordance with Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra, Luipa Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase*, p. 791.4.

7 For the great yoga, one first adopts the essential points of posture of the body and eliminates the residual breath. Imagining oneself as the deity, one focuses on a radiant *nada*, syllable, or sphere, size and color as specified in the instructions, within the central channel at the level of the navel. One performs a mild form of the vase-shaped holding of the breath. As a result, there arise the signs of the winds entering, abiding, and dissolving in the central channel, and also subtle experiences of warmth, bliss, and the four joys. If these experiences do not arise, one applies enhancement techniques in combination with the appropriate breath-control method.

By means of various cycles of visualization, one dissolves the form of the deity into luminous clarity and remains absorbed in emptiness. Then, from that state, there manifests the entire mandala or simply one's form as the body of the deity. With the dissolution of the winds, the experiences of warmth, bliss, and emptiness arise with greater intensity. By concentrating mainly on this visualization, as the body of the deity dissolves, one experiences special bliss and emptiness, after which the deity's body arises spontaneously, not generated by thoughts (a summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra, Luipa Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase*, pp. 791.5-794.2).

8 For the wind recitation, one imagines that at the navel channel-wheel of oneself as the male deity with female consort is a multicolored lotus with four petals. On each petal is visualized a different syllable, each of a different color, representing the natures of the earth-wind, the water-wind, the fire-wind, the wind-wind, and the space-wind. Synchronized with the breath, from the syllable in front a ray of light in the same color as the syllable, like a silk thread, rises within the central channel, issues from the nostrils, and then returns and dissolves back into the syllable. The visualization is repeated for each of the syllables. With the dissolution of one syllable into the next, along with the specified focus and phase of the breath, there arise in turn the signs of smoke, mirage, fireflies, blazing fire, and cloudless sky. Finally, one focuses on the syllable in the center, this time without light radiating, and applies the four phases of the vase-shaped holding. There arises the sign of the three existences pervading space. At this point, one gains mastery over the winds.

To release the knots of the channel-wheels, one repeats the visualization, this time focused at the heart rather than the navel, but trains only in the going and coming of the light of the central syllable. After that, one does the same, focused at the throat; then, at the crown of the head; and last, at the secret place (a summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra, Luipa Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase*, pp. 795.6-798.1).

9 For the vajra recitation, there are instructions for a preparatory meditation and a main practice. The first is as explained in the previous note, but in place of the syllables are spheres, each of a different color. One imagines a thread of light issuing forth from each sphere and returning, and so on, each phase of the visualization accompanied by

the sound of one of three syllables, while performing the breath-control technique explained in the instructions. By meditating in this way, during formal equipoise and during the post-meditation period, the experience of everything being like an illusion reaches its peak. This visualization is focused at the navel. However, to repeat the visualization with the focus shifted to the other channel-wheels will greatly enhance the experience of bliss.

For the main practice, one visualizes oneself as the male deity with female consort. Inside the body is a tetrahedron, its lower tip reaching the navel, and a central channel, its upper tip reaching the crown of the head and within it an inverted white syllable *ham*. The central channel bends toward the brow where a tiny white sphere moves about energetically. In the lower tip of the central channel is a dark-red syllable from which a flame rises. It touches a pale-red *a*-stroke, which then emits a flame with a small tip. From the syllable at the crown of the head, a blissful white light hangs down, like a cocoon or a hollow tube, just short of touching the flame at the navel. One applies the breath-control technique of the vase-shaped holding. In conjunction with the different phases of the breath control, one imagines that a droplet from the sphere descends within the cocoon of light, comes in contact with the flame, and so on, through the steps of the visualization, while focusing on the sounds of different syllables. At one stage one imagines that one's own body and mind are pervaded by bliss.

By training in that way repeatedly, one causes the very subtle winds and mind to be halted in the central channel. One perfects the experience of bliss and emptiness in formal equipoise, as well as the experience in the post-meditation period of everything being of the nature of illusion (a summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra*, *Luipa Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Completion Phase*, pp. 798.1-800.2).

- 10 Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord*, Toh. 1427, vol. Wa, ff. 186b-193a. In the Tengyur are found several commentaries on Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization*, among them Atisha's *Analysis of the Sequence of Visualization* (Toh. 1490, vol. Zha); Tathagatavajra's commentaries (Toh. 1509, 1510); and Viravajra's commentary (*Commentary on [Luipa's] Sequence of Visualization of Chakrasamvara*, Toh. 1512). Of these, Atisha's work provides the clearest commentary on the passages that Kongtrul cites in the text.
- 11 *Yoginisancharya Tantra* (Toh. 375), an explanatory tantra on the Samvara.
- 12 Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord* (Toh. 1427), vol. Wa, f. 192b1.
- 13 Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord* (Toh. 1427), vol. Wa, f. 192b1. Read *ni* for *na*.
- 14 Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord* (Toh. 1427), vol. Wa, f. 192b1-2. Note the different wording: ...*gi gnas 'gyur pa*.
- 15 Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord* (Toh. 1427), vol. Wa, f. 192b2.
- 16 Eight magic images (*pra phab bryad*) may be a reference to the images that appear in divination rites using eight different supports, namely, a mirror, a sword, a thumb, a lamp, the moon, the sun, water, and the eyes. However, we have not found a textual source that speaks of eight magic images.

17 Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord* (Toh. 1427), vol. Wa, f. 192b2. Luipa's text, Dergé Tengyur edition, reads: *de ni gzugs las 'das pa ste/ dngos po med pa'i chos nyid yin/ de yang bsam gyis mi khyab bsams*. IOK matches the words of Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization* as found in Atisha's *Analysis of the Sequence of Visualization* (Toh. 1490), vol. Zha, f. 200a4: *de ni gzugs las 'das pa ste/ dngos po med pa'i sems nyid yin/ sems nyid bsam par bya ba'o*.

18 See Atisha's explanation below, Chapter 9, n. 26.

19 As for the "gathering of female emissaries" (*pho nya mo rnams kyi 'du ba*), the mother tantras, in particular the Chakrasamvara, emphasize the yogic conduct of wandering throughout special localities known as power places (*gnas, pīṭha*). In these places the yogin summons, encounters, and interacts with the three types of female emissaries: the mantra-born (*sngags skyes*), field-born (*zhing skyes*), and innate (*lhan skyes*), differentiated on the basis of levels of realization. The innate emissaries are exalted beings who reside in the pure land called Superior ('Og min, Akanistha) as the enjoyment dimension of awakening manifesting in the form of goddesses. The field-born emissaries abide in unsurpassable contemplation and manifest as yoginis in the thirty-two power places. The mantra-born emissaries are women trained in the tantric path whose dwelling places are unspecified.

Initially, the yogin relies on mantra-born emissaries in order to assemble the field-born. After interacting with both of these, eventually the yogin can meet the innate emissaries and achieve the highest realization. See IOK, vol. III, pp. 533-566; and Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Hevajra*, ff. 232b-233a2. For a discussion of the three kinds of emissaries, see Wayman, *The Buddhist Tantras: Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism*, pp. 184-196.

20 Deliberate behavior (*brtul zhugs, vrata*) is defined as the transforming or overcoming (*brtul*) of ordinary modes of body, speech, and mind and the entering (*zhugs*) into the modes of awakened body, speech, and mind. The deliberate behavior of tantric conduct (*spyod pa'i brtul zhugs*) refers to a vast range of activities that include those performed during an initiation to bring one to spiritual maturity; those that bring about the achievement of paths not yet achieved; and those that enhance one's realizations, which result from practice of the phase of creation and phase of completion in one's dwelling place, in charnel grounds, or in power places. In particular, tantric conduct refers to secret conduct (*gsang spyod*) or awareness conduct (*rig spyod*), performed in formal sessions of meditation and post-meditation periods by a person who has not yet gained stability in pristine awareness; and to the deliberate behavior of awareness (*rig pa'i brtul zhugs, vidyavrata*), performed openly once one has gained stability in pristine awareness, which entails the wearing of yogic attire, being with consorts, and so forth.

On the subject of conduct in the context of the secret mantra system, Longchenpa explains that, having stabilized one's experience to some extent, in order to enhance the results of the practice one applies the deliberate behavior of awareness (*rig pa'i brtul zhugs*) in elaborate (*spros bcas*), unelaborate (*spros med*), and extremely unelaborate (*shin tu spros med*) ways. The elaborate approach is intended for a young person whose intelligence is not fully developed but who has considerable wealth. In an isolated house one builds a mandala, sets out offerings and adornments, and gathers

yogins and yoginis in numbers equal to the deities of the mandala. After having performed the creation of the deity and the completion phase, one enjoys all aspects of the gathering—singing and dancing, and so forth—without attachment. If carried out correctly, this approach will yield powers in six months. The unelaborate conduct is intended for a person of average wealth, intelligence, and age. It is basically the same as the above; however, one assembles only a very small number of participants. The extremely unelaborate conduct is intended for someone who has little wealth, is aged, and of great intelligence. For this last form of conduct, the individual remains alone in an isolated place and engages in what is called the *kusali* conduct of being always in the sphere of emptiness, performing only the activities of sleeping, eating, and eliminating. The deliberate behavior of awareness is so called because it is a conduct whereby emotional afflictions are transformed or overcome (*brtul*) by means of one's awareness (*rig pa*) (a summary of Longchenpa's *Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind*, vol. Kha, ff. 35a-36b).

- 21 Proximate cause (*nye rgyud*) usually refers to the three types of tantric conduct (elaborate, unelaborate, and extremely unelaborate) or the deliberate behavior of awareness. Here, however, it refers to the actual awakenings.
- 22 Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord* (Toh. 1427), vol. Wa, f. 192b2-4. The second line in the Dergé Tengyur edition reads *de las gzugs ni thob par 'gyur*; in IOK it reads *de nas gzungs ni thob par 'gyur*. The fifth line in the Dergé Tengyur reads *nyin mo bcom ldan rdo rje can*; in IOK, *nyin mo bcom ldan dpa' bo ste*. The seventh line in the Dergé Tengyur reads *mya ngan 'das byung dpa' bo rnams*; in IOK, *mya ngan 'das byung dpa' bo ni*. The eighth and ninth lines in Viravajra's commentary read *sprul ba las byung dpa' bo rnams/ yang lag drug cu sems kyis sprul*; in IOK, *drug pa sems kyis sprul ba yin/ dag pa chos kyis sprul pa ni*. The twelfth line in the Dergé Tengyur reads *he ni rgyu sogs rnam par spangs*; in IOK, *he ni rgyu sogs stong pa nyid*.
- 23 Viravajra explains that the words from “the staff is explained to be the deity's body” up to “the yogini, nighttime” refer to conduct associated with the phase of completion (Viravajra's *Commentary on [Luipa's] Sequence of Visualization of Chakrasamvara*, Toh. 1512, vol. Zha, f. 340b5).
- 24 Read *drug cu* for *drug pa*. See Atisha's explanation below, Chapter 9, n. 26.
- 25 In the Dergé Tengyur version (Toh. 1427), *yig* appears in the first and third lines (Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord*, Toh. 1427, vol. Wa, f. 192b4). Viravajra explains that the words from “*shri* means nondual pristine awareness” to “nirvana is not taught” indicate the result of the realization of *heruka* (Viravajra's *Commentary on [Luipa's] Sequence of Visualization of Chakrasamvara*, Toh. 1512, vol. Zha, f. 340b7).

Concerning the meaning of *ru* in *heruka*, Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization* states that *ru* means what is devoid of collections (*ru ni tshogs dang bral ba ste*) (Toh. 1427, vol. Wa, f. 192b4). Both Tathagatavajra's *Commentary on Luipa's Sequence of Visualization* (Toh. 1510, vol. Sha, f. 285b2) and Lvabapa's *Sadhana of Glorious Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1443, vol. Wa, f. 251a4) state that *ru* means being devoid of a collection of thoughts (*ru yig rtog tshogs bral ba ste*). Atisha explains that to be devoid of collections (*tshogs*) means being devoid of a collection that abides and perishes (*tshogs ni gnas pa*

dang jigs pa'i tshogs dang bral ba'o) (Atisha's *Analysis of the Sequence of Visualization*, Toh. 1490, vol. Zha, f. 187a6).

Atisha explains the four syllables of *shri heruka* in this way: Syllable *shri* means nondual pristine awareness and indicates that beings' mind-streams are indivisible from pristine awareness. Syllable *he* means the dispelling of the confusion concerning birth from no cause, and so on. It indicates that everything arises in emptiness. Syllable *ru* means the overcoming of death through the ultimate meaning which cannot be analyzed or examined. Syllable *ka* means that there is no inherent reality, material or immaterial, neither of cyclic life nor transcendence. That being said, the meaning indicated by the four syllables is the ultimate *heruka* (Atisha's *Vajra Song of the Vajra Seat*, Toh. 1494, vol. Zha, f. 209a5-7).

- 26 Atisha explains that Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization*, in order to illustrate the state of union of the nondual great seal, states "to contemplate the inconceivable," and so forth. The inconceivable is luminous clarity. To recollect the illusion-like body of the deity within the state of luminous clarity is termed "retention" (*gzungs, dhāraṇī*). With the attainment of retention, there arises the illusion-like body of the deity. The words "the staff is explained to be the deity's body," and so forth, indicate the esoteric instructions on conduct that should be learned from the *Chakrasamvara Tantra*.

As an extension of that, Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization* states that "the heroes are manifestations of transcendence," and so on. "Transcendence" denotes luminous clarity. The "heroes" who manifest from that are the twenty-five heroes. The "sixty" refers to the sixty-two goddesses of method and wisdom. These are emanated on the basis of the three minds and their winds. Further, "the form of Varahi" is explained to be an emanation of the ultimate; the main male deity, an emanation of the relative. To indicate that these are indivisible, Luipa's *Sequence of Visualization* says "*shri* means nondual pristine awareness," and so on. Nondual pristine awareness is the state of union. "Emptiness, such as that of the cause," and so on, refutes the notions that things arise from themselves, from other, from both, or without causes. "Devoid of collections" means being without collections subject to abiding and perishing. "Not abiding in any place at all" means not abiding in the two extremes: it is the union, the great seal (Atisha's *Analysis of the Sequence of Visualization*, Toh. 1490, vol. Zha, ff. 200b1-201a2).

- 27 Lwabapa (Lwa ba pa), also known as Kambala, a celebrated tantric master, was the son of a king of Oddiyana (or according to some, a king of Orissa). He is said to have become a monk when he was already advanced in age and began his training by studying the common teachings of Buddhism. He was introduced to the path of tantra in eastern India by Ghantapa. When he returned to Oddiyana, he engaged in tantric practices in the company of dakinis. He is said to have slept for twelve years at the gate of the king's palace, and when questioned by the king, Lwabapa would not utter a single word in response. His most famous disciples include Indrabhuti and Jalandhari. Taranatha includes him in the lineage of transmission of the action seal (*karmamudra*) instructions. See Taranatha's *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*.

Among the commentarial literature of the Samvara class (Toh. 1401-1606), the Tengyur attributes the first work, *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Chakrasamvara: Introduction to the Sadhana* (Toh. 1401), to Lwabapa, as well as *Sadhana of Glorious Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1443) and the *Lamp for the Mandala Ritual of the Glorious Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1444). The work in which Lwabapa expresses the

- point of view mentioned by Kongtrul in *IOK* is the *Sadhana of Glorious Chakrasamvara: The Crown Jewel*, Toh. 1443, vol. Wa.
- 28 Read *di bam ka ra* for *di bam kar*. Atisha, the renowned saint who taught in Tibet and gave rise to the Kadampa tradition, is said to have been the student of many masters, foremost among them Naropa, Buddhajnanapada (disciple of Krishnacharya), and Shri Param Dombipa. In *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*, Taranatha places him in the lineage of transmission of the luminous-clarity instructions. For details of his life, see Alaka Chattopadhyaya, *Atisa and Tibet*. Several works in the Samvara cycle contained in the Tengyur are attributed to Atisha: Toh. 1490-1497, 1587, 1591-1594.
 - 29 The following passage is found in Atisha's *Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord* (Toh. 1492), vol. Zha, f. 207a2-3.
 - 30 This line in Atisha's *Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord* (Toh. 1492, vol. Zha, f. 207a2) reads *bde chen rnam pa gsum gyis bstan* ("explained using three types of great bliss"). The line in *IOK* reads *dpe ni rnam pa gsum gyis bstan* ("explained using three types of examples"). Another of Atisha's Chakrasamvara sadhanas describes the body of union using three examples of union: The body of union arising from that luminous clarity manifests without being real, like an image reflected in a mirror; it is of many different colors, like those of a rainbow; and it is devoid of inherent existence, like the moon appearing on the surface of the water (Atisha's *Sadhana of the Solitary Hero*, Toh. 1493, vol. Sha, ff. 207b7-208a1). These three examples are explained in Chapter 7, section entitled "Illusory Body."
 - 31 Vajraghantapa (Ghantapa) (rDo rje dril bu pa), a master of royal lineage, was born in a region of eastern India close to Orissa. Ordained as a monk at Nalanda University, he eventually was elected abbot of the monastery due to his outstanding scholarship. There he met the accomplished Darika who introduced him to the tantric path and gave him instructions. While engaged in practice, he had a vision in which he was advised to travel to Oddiyana. It is in this country that Ghantapa met a woman who sold beer for a living. Her name was Vilasyavajra, also known as Yogini Chinto, and she had been trained by Dombipa and Vinapa. It was on the basis of her instructions that Ghantapa attained realization. For his life story, see Taranatha's *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*.
 - 32 Read *mngon brjod* for *nges brjod*. *Abhidhana Uttaratantra* (Toh. 369).
 There are five explanatory tantras of the Samvara, four unique tantras and one shared tantra. The unique tantras are the *Vajradaka* (Toh. 370), *Samvarodaya* (Toh. 373), *Abhidhana* (Toh. 369), and *Yoginisancharya* (Toh. 375). The shared is the *Samputa* (Toh. 381). On the various other opinions concerning the number of explanatory tantras of the Samvara, see Tsuda, trans., *The Samvarodaya-Tantra, Selected Chapters*, pp. 37-41.
 - 33 *Chakrasamvara Root Tantra* is the *Chakrasamvara Abridged Tantra* (Toh. 368). On the problems related to the identification of the *Chakrasamvara Root Tantra*, see Tsuda, trans., *The Samvarodaya-Tantra, Selected Chapters*, pp. 27-37.
 - 34 This work is Ghantapa's (Vajraghantapa's) *Five Stages of Chakrasamvara*, Toh. 1433,

vol. Wa, ff. 224-227. Several other works belonging to the Samvara class are attributed to Ghantapa in the Tengyur: Toh. 1431-1439, 1441, and 1571.

- 35 Ghantapa's (Vajraghantapa's) *Five Stages of Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1433), vol. Wa, f. 225a5. In the Dergé Tengyur edition of Ghantapa's work, the fourth line reads: *nges par ye shes skye bar 'gyur*; in *IOK*, *myur du ye shes skye bar 'gyur*.

- 36 For the stage of self-consecration (*bdag byin brlab pa'i rim pa*) with seed-syllable (*sa bon dang bcas pa*), one imagines oneself as the deity. At one's heart channel-wheel is a tiny pale-red sphere resting on a moon seat, as described in the instructions. One focuses on that, imagining that the winds that entered the central channel have dissolved into the sphere. Two spheres emanate from the sphere at the heart and then settle, one in the center of each eye. One holds the mind on those two, eyes closed or looking into darkness. Once one has familiarized with that practice, whenever one sees an object—for example, a flower—one meditates on the spheres as before, while keeping one's attention fixed on the flower. As one's eyes shift to another object, one does the same. In that way, contemplation develops in relation to seeing form, so that whenever one sees a form, contemplation arises spontaneously, and the winds that normally flow to the eyes are reversed. One then imagines that the spheres at the eyes dissolve into the sphere at the heart. This process eventually gives rise to clairvoyance, as well as to the experience of bliss and emptiness.

The related visualizations are done in a similar way, that is, one visualizes a sphere at both ears, at the root of the nose, at the root of the tongue, and in the cavity of the tip of the sex organ, each having been emanated from the sphere at the heart, and each of a different color as specified in the instructions. One focuses on light that emanates from all the spheres and pervades the body. One first holds the mind on these spheres without experiencing sounds, smells, etc. Then, one continues to hold the mind on them while having a continuous experience of a sense object, for example, the sound of wind or water, the smell of incense, a taste of molasses, etc. As a result of the practice, all perceptions of the objects arise as contemplation.

One then focuses the mind on a blue sphere at the heart that rests above the pale-red sphere; alternatively, one focuses on a seed-syllable, or a sphere between a sun and moon, or the seed-syllable between a sun and moon. One intentionally creates a thought and concentrates on the sphere (or seed-syllable) at the same time. The thought is simply present, not fading. Thereafter, whenever a thought arises, one focuses without distraction on the sphere. With mind resting in its natural state, the thought loses its strength. In that way, whenever one is thinking, contemplation arises spontaneously. Moreover, whenever the mind is engaged with an external object, one focuses on the sphere emanated from the heart to the object; when the mind is no longer engaged, one imagines that the emanated sphere is drawn back to the heart.

For the self-consecration without seed-syllable (*sa bon med pa*), one imagines oneself in the form of the deity, with a dark-colored oscillating light in the hollow interior of the body. Synchronized with the movement of the breath, that light moves slightly, reaching a point between the outer and inner areas of the tip of the nose, and then returns in a pale color, enters the center of the body, and so on, through the various steps of the sequence, until it reaches a point below the navel, from where the light pervades the entire body. As a result, there arises an experience of limitless bliss and emptiness. One then includes vajra breathing for which one's attention is

directed to the rhythm of the breath synchronized with the sounds of the three syllables. One repeats this whole process, this time with the light resting in the eyes; and then, in succession, in the ears, nose, tongue, and center of the heart. In that way, five types of clairvoyance are accomplished, and all appearances blaze with bliss and emptiness (a summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra*, *Ghantapa Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Five Stages in the Completion Phase*, pp. 807.2-811.1). See also Ghantapa's *Commentary on the Five Stages of Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1435, vol. Wa, ff. 228a6-229a2-6).

- 37 For the first, the vajra-cross with syllable, it is assumed that the practitioner has already developed, in the previous stages, the ability to hold the vital essence. The main practice entails imagining oneself as the male deity in union with the consort, with the specified focuses of visualization, a tetrahedron and vajra, in their secret places. One hand-span above one's head is a vajra-cross, each part—the east, north, west, south, and middle—of a different color. In the center of the empty interior is a configuration of symbols, the central syllable of which radiates light that draws in all the buddhas. That light then enters by way of the crown of one's head and descends to the secret place where the light becomes a sphere. This whole sequence is repeated many times. All the steps of the vajra-cross are done in conjunction with the breath-control technique of the vase-shaped holding in the way specified in the instructions.

For the second, the vajra-cross with different forms, one does the visualization as in the previous meditation, imagining that from the tetrahedron and vajra in the secret places radiate two vajras, each with a syllable and sphere, and they settle in the eyes. One imagines a similar vajra in the cavity of each ear, the root of the nose, the root of the tongue, and the tip of the sex organ. As a result of focusing on these, one elicits bliss based on objects of the senses. One then focuses on a vajra at the navel while applying the specified breath-control technique. One does the same at the heart, throat, and crown of the head. As a result, there arise the signs of wind and mind abiding in each of those places. Here, “different forms” refers to vajra, syllable, and sphere.

For the third, the vajra-cross without syllable, the different aspects of the visualization are synchronized with the issuing of the wind from each nostril individually and from both nostrils together. The different focuses include a sun disk at the brow; a moon disk above the sun disk; and five spheres atop the moon, each one of a different color, like tiny luminous stars. In the next phase of the practice, one focuses on the sun, moon, and spheres all at the same time, one above the other, at the mid-point between the eyebrows (a summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra*, *Ghantapa Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Five Stages in the Completion Phase*, pp. 811.1-813.1). See also Ghantapa's presentation of the vajra-cross stage in his *Commentary on the Five Stages of Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1435, vol. Wa, ff. 229b3-230a2). It is not clear how the threefold classification given by Kongtrul corresponds to Ghantapa's explanation.

- 38 The stage of filling the jewel (*nor bu 'gengs pa'i rim pa*) comprises the four seals: the action seal (*las kyi phyag rgya*); the hand seal (*lag pa'i phyag rgya*); the phenomena seal (*chos kyi phyag rgya*); and the great seal (*phya rgya chen po*). The majority of early masters consider the first seal to be the pledge seal (*dam tshig gi phyag rgya*), which is the imaginary consort; the second, revealed through the seal of the hand, the action seal, a real consort. In this tradition, however, since the imaginary consort occurs as an ancillary in each of the first three seals, it is not listed separately as one of four seals.

The practice of the first seal, the action seal, is to be learned directly from one's teacher.

For the second, the hand seal, one visualizes oneself as the deity with consort, with the vajra and lotus imagined as described in the instructions. From a syllable on the vajra arises a white sphere; from a syllable on the lotus, a red sphere. At the navel of the male deity is imagined the essential mantra of the female deity; at the heart, the quintessential mantra of the female; at the throat, the essential mantra of the male deity; and at the forehead, the quintessential mantra of the male. At the navel of the female deity is the essential mantra of the male deity; at the heart, the quintessential mantra of the male; at the throat, the essential mantra of the female deity; and at the forehead, the quintessential mantra of the female. As one performs the practice, bodhichitta flows downward, and one experiences the four joys. Then, as one utters the specified syllable, the bodhichitta ascends through the central channel, and so on, through the steps of the sequence.

For the third, the seal of phenomena, one performs a consecration and repeats the previous visualization. One focuses on the syllable at the vajra and remains absorbed in the pristine awareness of the initiation. As bliss arises at that place, one imagines that the female deity dissolves into light and is absorbed into the syllable, which moves to the root of the vajra. When bliss similar to the previous experience arises there, one imagines that the female deity again dissolves. One repeats that process, with the syllable shifted to the navel, then to the throat, and finally to the crown of the head. When bliss is stabilized in those places, the innate bliss of the mind, moist with molten bliss, seals outer phenomena, and all phenomena assist in the generation of bliss.

For the fourth, the great seal, through focusing on bliss, one remains in nonconceptual contemplation. Then, at a certain point, by simply continuing in the contemplation of bliss and emptiness, one is able to bring forth molten bliss repeatedly. That indicates realization of the stage of the great seal without form (*rmam pa med pa*) (a summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra*, *Ghantapa Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Five Stages in the Completion Phase*, pp. 813,1-815,3). See also Ghantapa's presentation of the four seals in his *Commentary on the Five Stages of Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1435, vol. Wa, ff. 230a4-232b5).

- 39 For the stage called Jalandhara, one imagines that at a point below the navel, within a tetrahedron, are five tiny spheres, one in the center and one in each of the cardinal directions, each of a different color. One applies the vase-shaped holding of the breath. During one phase of the holding, one imagines that wind is absorbed into the spheres. During the next phases of the breath control, one focuses on the spheres. When the inner fire blazes, or the signs of the mirage, etc., manifest, one visualizes the central channel as described in the instructions, with a white syllable at the crown of the head and a thin branch going to the brow. As one applies the next phase of the breath technique, light from four of the spheres gathers in the central channel, a flame rises from the central sphere, and so forth, through the steps of the visualization, until the flame exits from the brow and enters the left nostrils of all buddhas. The pristine awareness and the blessings of the bodies, voices, and minds of all buddhas enter through one's right nostril in the form of bodhichitta, while fire and nectar enter through the left nostril, and so forth, through the final steps of the visualization (a summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra*, *Ghantapa Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the*

Five Stages in the Completion Phase, pp. 815.4-816.5). See also Ghantapa's discussion on this subject in his *Commentary on the Five Stages of Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1435, vol. Wa, ff. 202b-203a2).

- 40 For the stage of the inconceivable (*bsam mi khyab kyi rim pa*), there are two aspects: mind entering emptiness; and emptiness entering mind. For the first, one visualizes oneself and all appearances as the deity and consort. At one's heart is a white syllable standing on a moon disk. This syllable represents the nature of the pristine-awareness being, and one focuses on its *nada* tip. Then, all appearances dissolve into light and are absorbed into oneself. The female deity dissolves into oneself as the male deity, and so on, through the steps of the dissolution, until only the *nada* remains. One holds the mind on that for a long time. Finally, the *nada* also dissolves into space. Free from all concepts related to the three times, one remains in uncontrived contemplation. At the end of the session, one arises as the *nada*.

For the second, one begins with the previous meditation of mind entering emptiness. Then, from emptiness, one imagines oneself appearing instantaneously as the single body of the deity. One remains in meditation, sealing the appearance with the previous experience of emptiness. In the post-meditation period, one imagines that all external appearances suddenly manifest as forms of the deity, and one continues to meditate that everything is devoid of inherent nature. Before going to sleep, one applies any of the above meditations that one has cultivated during the day. In that way, one enters the luminous clarity of sleep (a summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra*, *Ghantapa Tradition, Manual of Instructions on the Five Stages in the Completion Phase*, pp. 816.5-819.2). See also Ghantapa's *Commentary on the Five Stages of Chakrasamvara*, Toh. 1435, vol. Wa, f. 203a3).

Longchenpa explains these four last stages as follows: For the vajra-cross stage, one applies the specified technique for manipulating the winds and imagines that in the centers of the five channel-wheels are the insignia of the five primordial buddhas: at the head, a wheel; at the throat, a jewel; at the heart, a vajra; at the navel, a lotus; and at the secret place, a sword. All the insignia of the five families of buddhas are drawn to and dissolve into their respective insignia at the channel-wheels. One thereby achieves the state of calm abiding. For the stage of filling the jewel, through the great bliss experienced with a seal, one experiences and recognizes the pristine awareness of the four joys. For the Jalandhara stage, the insignia of the five primordial buddhas change into the deities' forms, male and female, from which nectar flows downward and fills one's body. One focuses the mind on the bliss elicited by the melting of vital essence by the inner fire. For the stage of the inconceivable, one imagines the seed-syllable of the specific deity in a sphere of light at the heart. From the seed-syllable emanates light that touches all of cyclic existence and perfect peace, transforming all buddhas and beings into light. This light dissolves into the sphere at the heart. One's body and the sphere of light dissolve into the seed-syllable, which dissolves in stages. Finally, one remains in the ultimate dimension of reality, without any point of reference. Following that, one meditates, as before, through the stages of emanating and dissolving.

A beginner trains in these stages in the above order, while an experienced meditator begins with whatever stage seems easiest to cultivate. Thus, there is not one set order of practice of these stages (a summary of Longchenpa's *Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind*, ff. 20a1-21a3).

- 41 The term “Jalandhara” here seems to be used as a metaphor for the central channel. Elsewhere (for example, Krishnacharya’s *Analysis of the Four Stages*, Toh. 1452, vol. Wa, f. 364b) are found references to Jalandhara’s path as the central channel.
- 42 Great Jetsun or Venerable One (rJe btsun chen po): an epithet of Taranatha.
- 43 The outer seal (*phyi’i phyag rgya*) is an actual consort (*las rgya*), while the inner seal (*nang gi phyag rgya*) refers to the seal of phenomena, the great seal, etc.
- 44 Lord Mikyö Dorjé (rJe mi bskyod rdo rje), the Eighth Karmapa (1507-1554), was born in eastern Tibet. As a young boy, Mikyö Dorjé studied with Situ Tashi Paljor. He later met Sangyé Nyenpa, whom the previous Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso had appointed to transmit the lineage to his next incarnation. He received teachings directly from Padmasambhava and others in visions, and enhanced his understanding by studying with Karma Trinlepa and Chokdrup Sengé, from whom he learned the other-emptiness (*gshan stong*) approach to centrist philosophy (*madhyamaka*). With his intellectual knowledge complete, Mikyö Dorjé dedicated himself to practice, all the time meeting masters and receiving instructions in visions. He later became a prolific writer and greatly enriched the Kagyu lineage.
- 45 Krishnacharya (Nag po spyod pa), a disciple of Jalandhari, is known by various other names, such as Charyadharapada (sPyod pa ’chang zhabs) and Charyadharendrapada (sPyod pa ’chang dbang po’i zhabs). Krishna is said to have been prophesied by the Buddha, as recorded in the *Continuation of the Kalachakra Tantra* and *Mahakala Tantra*. In Taranatha’s *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*, Krishna appears in the lineages of instructions for the inner fire, action seal, and luminous clarity. Taranatha also wrote a biography of Krishna.
 In the Tengyur, several works pertaining to the Samvara class are attributed to Krishna: Toh. 1446-1448, 1450-1453, 1460, and 1537. The *Sadhana of Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1445) is listed without the name of the author, but most likely it is also a work of Krishna.
- 46 The primary source for the teaching on the four stages is Krishna’s *Four Stages* (Toh. 1451, vol. Wa) and its autocommentary, *Analysis of the Four Stages* (Toh. 1452, vol. Wa).
- 47 As for the branches of the creation phase known as the nine yogas (*rnal ’byor dgu*), eight branches of yoga (*rnal ’byor yan lag brgyad*) are the yoga of mantra (recitation); the sacrificial offering (*gtor ma, bali*) (to eliminate obstacles); the yoga of partaking of food and drink (to generate positive potential); the yoga of passion practiced with an action consort; the yoga of conduct between formal sessions of meditation (to purify one’s behavior); the yoga of sleep (to transform sleep into virtue); the yoga of waking up at dawn; and the yoga of washing for the purpose of purification (*IOK*, vol. III, p. 199). The eight are referred to as “the yogas arising from equipoise.” The ninth yoga is likely equipoise itself. However, we have not found a textual source that speaks of a ninth yoga.

At this point, on the basis of the yogas that are branches of the phase of creation, one trains in the meditation in four sessions, or however many appropriate, while always recognizing the ground of purification, the purificatory means, the objects to be purified, and the result. The principal point is to meditate on the deity. In what-

ever way one carries out the recitation, one should do so until one has completed the specified number or one produces the signs. However, by those means alone, with the exception of special persons of outstanding potential, it is difficult to gain the clarity of image of the deity, or to achieve stability or perfection. Therefore, the so-called “actual meditation” (see next note) is indispensable. In order to avert obstacles, and to familiarize with contemplation, it is important to cultivate this imaginative meditation through which one nurtures great positive potential and reinforces the special connection between the purificatory means and the objects of purification (a summary of Taranatha’s *Chakrasamvara Tantra Exegesis of the Essence of the Teachings of Krishnacharya* [Toh.1451; 1452] on the Four Stages of the Completion Phase, pp. 931.3–932.1).

- 48 The actual meditation is explained in three points: the method for training in the yoga of the deity; the measures of success; and the period of stabilization.

The first has three aspects: training in the form of the deity; training in the order; and training in the post-meditation period. The first aspect entails developing clarity of visualization so that the mental image of the deity appears as vividly as light reflected from a mirror. To do so, one focuses on a fine statue, painting, or other representation of the deity. Then one creates the image in one’s mind and meditates on that. In that way, one trains by alternating between looking at the statue and meditating on the image. For the second aspect, training in the order, one begins by clearly visualizing the main deity. Then, one visualizes the consort, the retinue deities, the celestial palace, the charnel ground, and the circle of protection, until one has gained clarity of the total mandala. One may train in any of a variety of ways: at times, one may visualize just a few deities in a small mandala; or many deities in a huge mandala; at other times, one may vary the colors, sizes, numbers of arms and faces, and postures; other times, the many aspects reduced to a few, or vice versa. For the third, training in the post-meditation period, one begins with a schedule of four sessions. When meditation is stable, one then practices for the same length of time but in two sessions rather than four; when that is stable, in a single session for the duration of the night; and when that is stable, day and night without break. By training gradually in this way, one should no longer feel the passing of many days, and if one is in good health, one should be able to practice all day long in an uninterrupted session.

The second point concerns measures of success. To have developed clarity of visualization so that the mental image of the deity appears vividly is the measure of success with respect to the form of the deity. To be able to change at will the focus of meditation is the measure of success with respect to training in the order. To be able to remain in meditation for as long as one wishes is the measure of success with respect to the post-meditation period.

The third point concerns the period of stabilization. When one has gained stability in visualization in terms of four aspects—colors, shapes, numbers, and times—one is said to have achieved stabilization (a summary of Taranatha’s *Chakrasamvara Tantra Exegesis of the Essence of the Teachings of Krishnacharya on the Four Stages of the Completion Phase*, pp. 932.1–933.7).

- 49 For the training in the crucial points of instructions on the view, there are four parts: the three crucial points concerning the view of the object, the fundamental nature to be ascertained; the one crucial point that is the secondary condition, the means

of ascertainment; the three crucial points of meditation, the subject, the manner of ascertainment; and the five crucial points to be recognized in order to cut deviations, a total of twelve crucial points.

The three crucial points concerning the view of the fundamental nature are the following: appearances lack true characteristics, which means that primary causes, secondary causes, results, places, bodies, and enjoyments are all unreal, like an illusion; cyclic existence is devoid of self-nature since karma, emotions, and suffering are like dreams, and apart from simply manifesting, have no inherent existence; one's own mind is a union, meaning that nondual pristine awareness, primordially free from concepts, is the immutable dimension of emptiness.

The one crucial point that is the secondary condition means devotion for the master.

The three crucial points of meditation are the following: all appearances and sounds are ascertained to be manifestations of mind; mind is ascertained as emptiness, inexpressible, without root; and emptiness is ascertained to be the pristine awareness of great bliss.

The five crucial points to be recognized in order to cut deviations are as follows: the example of a dream illustrates that appearances are mind; the examples of the moon on water and the clapping of hands illustrate that appearances do not exist in their own right; the example of a lamp and its light illustrates deviations based on conceptual elaborations, such as conceiving of reality and appearance as the same or separate; the example of recognizing a person by seeing his body illustrates the union of appearance and emptiness; and the example of space illustrates immutable all-pervasiveness (a summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra Exegesis of the Essence of the Teachings of Krishnacharya on the Four Stages of the Completion Phase*, pp. 933.7-934.7).

- 50 The path of yoga has four basic visualizations or focuses. Each focus forms one of the four stages—the stage of tantra (*rgyud kyi rim pa*), that of mantra (*sngags kyi rim pa*), that of pristine awareness (*ye shes kyi rim pa*), and the secret stage (*gsang ba'i rim pa*).

The first focus is that of the stage of tantra. For this, one imagines one's own body as the rainbow-like form of the deity, with a central channel having the thickness and length specified in the instructions. The right channel and the left channel are on either side, and there are four channel-wheels. On the eight inner petals and fifty-six outer petals of the navel channel-wheel are the vowels and consonants, with a syllable in the center of the central channel, all red in color and facing upward. On the four cardinal petals of the eight petals of the heart channel-wheel are the four main vowels and on the intermediate petals, the semi-vowels, with a syllable in the center, all blue and facing downward. On the four inner petals of the throat channel-wheel are four vowels and on the outer twelve petals, twelve vowels, with a syllable in the center, all blue and facing upward. On the thirty-two petals of the channel-wheel at the crown are two sets of sixteen vowels, with a syllable in the center, all white and facing downward. At the anus is visualized a blue wind mandala, half-moon shaped; at the lower tip of the central channel, a dark-red syllable; and in the left and right channels, stacks of vowels and consonants. That describes the most complex visualization. For the visualization of middling complexity, in place of syllables are spheres of light. For the simplest visualization, one imagines one syllable in each channel-wheel and the

dark-red syllable at the lower tip of the central channel. During the different phases of the breath—inhalation, pause, and exhalation—one focuses on different aspects of the visualization as set forth in the instructions. These are the basic visualizations for the stage of tantra (a summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra Exegesis of the Essence of the Teachings of Krishnacharya on the Four Stages of the Completion Phase*, pp. 935.7-938.2). See also Krishna's *Analysis of the Four Stages*, Toh. 1452, vol. Wa, ff. 358b1-368a4.

- 51 For the stage of mantra, one does the tantra-stage visualization (as described in the previous note). One applies the vase-shaped holding, which causes the wind mandala to ignite a dark-red syllable. Fire from the syllable rises in the central channel and strikes the syllable at the navel. The navel channel-wheel is pervaded by the light of the fire. From the navel, a flame, like a flash of lightning, enters the right channel, rises to the heart channel-wheel, and burns it. Then the flame re-enters the right channel, continues to rise through that channel, and so forth, through the steps of the visualization, until the bodhichitta of the crown syllable melts and descends in a strong flow through the left channel, filling each channel-wheel in succession and dissolving into the syllable at the navel. From that syllable a very thin, luminous flame rises through the central channel, and so on, through the steps of the visualization, until the flame exits the body and goes back and forth to the buddhas, while filling all of space and drawing nectar from the bodies of the buddhas.

If one is a beginner unable to do that visualization, one imagines that all buddhas, bodhisattvas, wrathful and peaceful deities, male and female, become one in the master, who appears as a deity in the space in front. The flame enters through his right nostril and melts the pure essences of the four channel-wheels of his body. Then, together with the flame, the pure essences exit from his nostrils and are absorbed into the syllable at the crown, from which a nectar starts to fall, and so on, until a bliss beyond duality arises in one's mind. These steps constitute the stage of mantra. This is the yoga of the inner fire, a secret instruction related equally to the channels, winds, and vital essences, for which one takes as the path the form or aspect of the stage of mantra (a summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra Exegesis of the Essence of the Teachings of Krishnacharya on the Four Stages of the Completion Phase*, pp. 938.3-940.6).

- 52 For the stage of pristine awareness, one does the previous meditation of the stage of mantra, up to and including the visualization of the flame going to and returning from the buddhas. Then, one focuses on the nectar of the melted crown-syllable flowing downward and filling the throat channel-wheel, whereupon one experiences the pristine awareness of the joy at the time of the path. Likewise, the channel-wheels at the heart, navel, and secret place are filled, each in turn, giving rise to the supreme joy, the special joy, and the innate joy. One performs the breath-control technique as set forth in the instructions. These steps constitute the yoga of the vital essence, for which one takes as the path the form or aspect of the stage of pristine awareness (a summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra Exegesis of the Essence of the Teachings of Krishnacharya on the Four Stages of the Completion Phase*, pp. 940.6-941.4).
- 53 For the secret stage, one completes the previous meditation and imagines that the tip of the vajra is filled with vital-essence nectar, the color as specified in the instructions. One then focuses the mind on an extremely luminous sphere of vital essence at the

center of the channel-wheel of the secret place and imagines that there arises the first of the ascending joys. As the vital essence moves upward to the navel, there arise the four joys, one in each quarter of the distance to the navel. Similarly, as it moves from the navel to the heart, there arise the four supreme joys; from the heart to the throat, the four special joys; and from throat to the crown, the four innate joys. This fourth visualization is the yoga of the vital essence.

One then visualizes, as before, a flame going to and returning from the buddhas. The inner fire continuously blazes, reaching the crown of the head. The vital essence begins to flow down from the crown, and so forth, through the steps of the sequence, until one's body and all appearances are transformed into the nature of bodhichitta. Then everything vanishes, like breath on a mirror, into luminous clarity, beyond center and periphery. One remains in contemplation for a long time in that uncontrived state. Then, like the flash of a fish as it springs from water, one arises in the form of the deity, luminous and empty, and filled with the light of vital essence. One remains in contemplation for a while on the appearance aspect of the Heruka as the union of appearance and emptiness. This fifth visualization is the meditation of successive destruction applied on the basis of inner fire. The steps of the fourth and fifth visualizations constitute the way to take as the path the form or aspect of the secret stage (a summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra Exegesis of the Essence of the Teachings of Krishnacharya on the Four Stages of the Completion Phase*, pp. 941.4-943.2). See also Krishna's *Analysis of the Four Stages*, Toh. 1452, vol. Wa, ff. 365a7-367b3.

54 Read *rnam pa* for *rnams*.

55 The three crucial points concerned with winds refer to the forceful application of breathing techniques, mild application of breathing techniques, and filling and emptying.

The three crucial points concerned with meditation on nonconceptuality are to meditate on the nonconceptual state using thoughts; to enter the nonconceptual state once the proliferation of thoughts has exhausted its strength; and to meditate on the nonconceptual state through forceful means.

The three crucial points concerned with the vital essences refer to training with respect to color, shape, and dispersion.

The three crucial points concerned with the inner fire refer to the preparation, the main practice, and the supplementary instructions. The preparation entails the visualization of a circle of protection, cultivation of positive potential, physical training, and training in the winds and yoga. The main practice comprises the inner fire of awakened mind; the inner fire of awakened speech; and the inner fire of awakened body. The first, that of awakening mind, is threefold: the pledge inner fire, which produces heat; the inner fire of the seal of phenomena, producing bliss; and the inner fire of the great seal, which transforms bliss into nonconceptuality. These three are intended primarily to transform mind into bliss and emptiness. The second is also threefold: the inner fire of warm sensation; the inner fire of clarity (the subtle); and the inner fire of bliss (the very subtle). These three are intended primarily to purify the winds. The third is the inner fire that transforms the wind of matter into the wind of clarity. This one is intended primarily to release the knots of the channel-wheels. The main practice brings about the three experiences of bliss, clarity, and nonconceptuality. The supplementary instructions concern the practice of inner fire in dreams (a

summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra Exegesis of the Essence of the Teachings of Krishnacharya on the Four Stages of the Completion Phase*, pp. 943.7-952.3).

- 56 The instructions for the practice with a female emissary include the same crucial points mentioned in the previous note concerned with the winds, channels, vital essences, and the nonconceptual state, plus the supplementary instructions on dreams, and so forth. The actual instructions are set forth in twelve points: the six preparatory factors of purifying the winds, meditation on an imaginary seal, viewing things as illusion, and so on; and the six elements of the main practice, the descent of the vital essence, the holding, reversing, spreading, mixing with winds, and bringing the vital essence into the dimension of emptiness (a summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra Exegesis of the Essence of the Teachings of Krishnacharya on the Four Stages of the Completion Phase*, pp. 955.7-956.4).
- 57 The first of the two equalizings (*ro snyoms pa gnyis*) is that of the four elements, which means to equalize, through practice, the elements that are in excess. The second, the equalizing through the focus, comprises the equalizing of experience and the equalizing of mind.

Elimination by means of the four syllables (*yi ge bzhi*) comprises four practices: sounding *bik*; sounding *ha*; sounding *ab*; and sounding *hum*. If one has pain or illness in any spot from the throat up, one visualizes twelve holes in the head, utters *bik*, and imagines that the problem is expelled through the holes. Similarly, if one has pain or illness in the upper part of the body, one visualizes many holes in that part, as well as in the hands and fingers, and utters *ha*. If one has pain or illness in the lower part of the body, one visualizes many holes in that part, as well as in the legs and feet, and utters *ab*. If one has pain or illness throughout the whole body, one visualizes many holes all over the body and utters *hum* twenty-one times. For each, one imagines that the pain and illness are expelled through the holes.

The six armors (*go cha drug*) refer to the armor of emptiness, armor of bliss, armor of inner fire, armor of the mind, armor of the master, and armor of the deity. For the first, the armor of emptiness, wherever one has pain or illness, one meditates on the place of the pain as empty, and then applies the breath technique as specified in the instructions. If the pain or illness is throughout the body, one imagines that the whole body, starting from the tips of the fingers, dissolves. If one has pain or illness in the innermost part of the body, one trains in the filling-and-expelling phase of the breathing technique. For the second, the armor of bliss, one imagines a sphere, white with red hue, the size of a goat pellet, in the spot where one has pain or illness. Light from the sphere dispels all pain and illness. For the third, the armor of inner fire, one imagines an *a*-stroke in the spot where one has pain or illness. If the pain or illness is throughout the body, one imagines that flames emanate from the triangular fire at the navel and that all physical problems are driven out through the orifices and consumed by the flames. At the end, the flames vanish into the fire at the navel. For the fourth, the armor of the mind, one recognizes that all problems such as illness are simply one's own mind. While viewing them as illusions, one performs the specified breath technique and physical movement, imagining that they are dispelled. For the fifth, the armor of the master, one visualizes, at the spot of the illness, one's master, whose light purifies oneself of the illness. At the end, one visualizes the master at the crown of the head, makes fervent supplications, and imagines that the master melts into light and is absorbed into oneself. As a result, all one's illnesses are expelled through the lower

orifices. As an alternative approach, one recognizes all physical problems to be the awakened activity of the master since they purify oneself of karma and afflictions. For the sixth, the armor of the deity, one meditates as in the fifth, except that the master is replaced by the deity (a summary of Taranatha's *Chakrasamvara Tantra Exegesis of the Essence of the Teachings of Krishnacharya on the Four Stages of the Completion Phase*, pp. 956.4-959.7). Enhancement by means of the three conducts (*spyod pa gsum*), the elaborate, unelaborate, and utterly unelaborate, is not discussed at this point in the text.

- 58 There is a commentary by Taranatha on this called the *Chakrasamvara Tantra Commentary on the Illumination of the Secret Essential Principle* [of Krishnacharya (Toh. 1450) on the Completion Phase of the Tantra] found in his *Collected Works*, vol. 11, pp. 135-295.
- 59 The source of this teaching is Krishna's *Vital Essence of Spring* (Toh. 1448, vol. Wa) and his own *Extensive Commentary on the Vital Essence of Spring* (Toh. 1449, vol. Wa).
- 60 *Samputa Tantra*, Toh. 381, vol. Ga, f. 112a6-7.
- 61 The Mare is a reference to the volcanic iron mountain range called Mare, or Mare-Head, which resembles the head of a horse (*rta gdong ri*) and is a symbol for fire. According to ancient Indo-Buddhist cosmology, this mountain range encircles our world-system as the outermost rim around the ocean furthest from the center of the world-system. From the mouths of the mountains issues the fire known as the "Mare's fire" (*rgod ma'i me*), which is said to evaporate excess water of the oceans in order to maintain their proper level. See Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Myriad Worlds* (English translation), p. 111; see also Abhayakara's *Awn of Esoteric Instructions* (Toh.1198), vol. Cha, f. 204b7.
- 62 In his commentary on these lines, Krishna states that at the heart of every being is an eight-spoked channel-wheel of phenomena, with anthers and corolla, the pure nature of the eight watches of day and night. At the center of this channel-wheel is a triple-circle channel (*sum skor ma, traivṛtta*), the lower face resembling the flower of plan-tain tree, luminous like the flame of a sesame-oil lamp.
 In the center of the channel, ready to drip like morning frost as the rays of the sun strike, is the syllable *hum*, the size of a tiny mustard seed. By virtue of being inexpressible, it is invincible. Being devoid of fear with respect to any conceptually created phenomena, it is called "hero." Resembling the season of spring, which gladdens the hearts of all creatures, it is called "spring" (*dpyid*). It is the blessed *heruka* to be realized, not the one with four faces and twelve arms. Fanned by karmic winds that have the characteristics of the perfect union of the male and female, the fire of pristine awareness, which resembles the fire of the Mare-Head Mountain Range, blazes at the navel. The fire rises towards the *hum*, causing the spring flow of nectar of the syllable *hum* to descend; in other words, this "hero" melts and flows down to the fire. Because these two unite inseparably, it is said that they rest in union and hence are called "vital essence of spring." This, in the *Vasantatilaka*, is indicated with the words "...*heruka*." The syllable *hum*, which has the characteristics just described, is the glorious *heruka*. Because it blazes with pristine awareness, it is Varahi, the vital essence

(*thig le*) (a summary of Krishna's *Extensive Commentary on the Vital Essence of Spring*, Toh. 1449, vol. Wa, f. 324b1-6).

- 63 This is the seventh of the nine cycles on the path, Krishna's cycle of *Olapati* (*o la pa ti lam skor*), based on the Chakrasamvara. See above, Chapter 8, n. 75.

Drokmi Lotsawa Sakya Yeshé ('Brog mi lo tsa ba sa skya ye shes) (993-1050) was a renowned translator and master who was sent to India and Nepal with Taglo Shönu Tsöndru (sTag lo gzhon nu brtson 'grus) during the second period of the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet. While in Nepal, Drokmi studied with Shantibhadra, a disciple of Shantipa, who directed him to his master. Drokmi studied the sutras and the tantras for eight years with Shantipa. He received the path-and-fruition (*lam 'bras*) instructions from Prajnendaruchi (Shes rab kyi dbang po gsal ba), who belonged to the Virupa lineage, and remained with him for three years, receiving the initiations and teachings of numerous tantras. It is through these teachings that he gained confidence and understanding. Later, Gayadhara visited him in Tibet and conferred on him the path-and-fruition instructions. Drokmi translated into Tibetan the *Hevajra Tantra* and numerous other tantric texts in addition to revising existing translations. It is said that he taught mainly the *Samvara Tantra*. From his lineage transmitted through his disciple Kōn Könchok Gyalpo ('Khon dkon mchog rgyal po) originated the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism. See *The Blue Annals*, trans. Roerich, on the new tantras and the followers of path and fruition, pp. 204-240.

- 64 *bsang mtha' pa'i lugs*.

- 65 Venerable Sakyapa (rJe btsun sa skya pa) likely refers to Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (1092-1158), the son of Kōn Könchog Gyalpo, who founded the Sakya Monastery in 1073.

- 66 Mar Chögyal (dMar chos rgyal), a student of Purang Lochung (Pu rang lo chung), was also known as Mar Chökyi Gyaltsen (dMar chos kyi rgyal mtshan). He became very learned in the Chakrasamvara tantra. See *The Blue Annals*, trans. Roerich, pp. 382, 388, 555, 706.

- 67 Jetsun Drakpa (rJe btsun grags pa), a reference to Drakpa Gyaltsen (Grags pa rgyal mtshan) (1147-1216), the brother of Sönam Tsemo and one of the great patriarchs of the Sakya school.

- 68 The *Vital Essence of Spring* (Toh. 1448) and the *Illumination of the Secret Principle* (Toh. 1450) are the only two of these six compendiums attributed to Krishna that we have found recorded in the Tengyur. There are different viewpoints concerning which are the six works of Krishna. According to the tradition of Naropa, the six are the *Rite of Initiation*, the *Sadhana* (Toh. 1445), the *Rite of Fire* (Toh. 1255), the *Four Stages* (Toh. 1451), the *Vital Essence of Spring*, and the *Illumination of the Secret Principle*. Mardo the Translator has asserted that the *Rite of Fire* does not contain the true words of Krishnacharya. Gayadhara, on whose viewpoint the assertions of Jetsun Drakpa and others are likely based, refers to them as the six compendiums and affirms that they treat the phase of completion. However, Gayadhara mistakenly includes among them the *Explanation of the Vows*, the *Epitome*, and *Vital Essence-Great Seal*. Although those do belong to the extraordinary cycle of Krishna's teachings, they have not been written by him but rather by one of Krishna's disciples who

came to be known as “Krishna the Second” (according to the life story of Krishnacharya by Taranatha).

- 69 Four extremes (*mtsha' bzhi*): the notions of existence, nonexistence, both existence and nonexistence, and neither.

CHAPTER 10: MOTHER TANTRA SYSTEMS: CHATUHPITHA, MAHAMAHA, BUDDHAKAPALA, AND TARA YOGINI

- 1 In the Tibetan Buddhist canon, the cycle of the Chatuhpitha, a mother tantra of the permanent family (*rtag pa'i rigs*), includes Toh. 428 to 430 of the Kangyur and Toh. 1607 to 1621 of the Tengyur.

The deity of this tantra is blue, with three three-eyed faces, sitting in the bodhisattva posture, wrathful and mesmerizing in appearance. Adorned with five skulls on the head and snakes on the body, his gaping mouths utter terrifying sounds. The three right hands hold staff, ax, and vajra; and the three left, bell, kapala, and sword. He is embraced by a beautiful consort, white, whose upper teeth press upon her lower lip. See Aryadeva's *Sadhana of Chatuhpitha*, Toh. 1610, vol. Ya, ff. 75b7-76a4.

- 2 Here, for the instruction of the cow's udder (*ba'i nu ma*) related to the phase of creation, one trains in the two nose-tips: the nose-tip of the lower door, which means the nose-tip at the secret place (*gsang ba'i sna rtse*); and the nose-tip of the upper door (*steng sgo sna rtse*), which means the nose-tip at the crown of the head (*spyi bo'i sna rtse*) or, alternatively, the nose-tip at the mid-point between the eyebrows (*smin mtshams kyi sna rtse*).

For the lower door, one first carries out the preliminaries, such as taking refuge, generating the awakening mind, creating the protection circle, and making sacrificial offerings, and then completes the meditation of the concise creation. Next, one visualizes oneself as the female deity Jnaneshvari in union with the deity Vajrasattva. At the point where the channels of the secret places meet, at the nose-tip of the lotus, there arises, from a syllable, a vajra of the specified size and color. In its center is a tiny sphere on which one focuses. Alternatively, one visualizes oneself as the male deity with consort and focuses on a sphere at the tip of the vajra. In conjunction with that visualization, one maintains the correct posture and applies the specified breath-control technique, eliminating the residual breath three times, drawing in the upper breath slowly, and so forth, training in that way for a month or so, until the visualization is clear and signs that the winds are under one's control arise. Next, one imagines that the lights of the winds are absorbed into the sphere in the vajra of the nose-tip of the secret place (if one has visualized oneself as the female deity). One then carries out the steps in the visualization, which include a fire arising in the secret place, vital essence falling from the crown, and so forth. This practice gives rise to a special experience of bliss and emptiness.

For the upper door, one first performs the preliminaries mentioned above and then visualizes, at the mid-point between the eyebrows within the forehead, a tetrahedron as described in the instructions. Inside is a tiny white sphere with a syllable above. One applies the specified breath control while imagining that the winds as lights strike the sphere, and so on, through the steps of the visualization, until one experiences bliss, which one views as an illusion. At the end of the session, one imagines that the syllable

and the sphere dissolve into nectar. One remains in a relaxed state, breathing naturally. In that way, the appearance of the deity is sealed with bliss, and bliss, with emptiness. This practice will also enhance the visualization of the deity (a summary of Taranatha's *Chatuhpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 833.7-836.7).

- 3 Closing off the nine gateways (*sgo dgu dgag pa*) means to block the nine points from where the consciousness can exit at the time of death. The nine vary according to different sources. The *Chatuhpitha* lists what are known as “gateways to the intermediate state”: navel, forehead, crown of the head, nostrils, ears, eyes, mouth, urethra, and anus. The forehead actually means the point midway between the eyebrows called the “gateway of the stupa” (*mchod rten sgo*) or “sphere at the forehead” (*dpral ba'i thig pa*). The urethra is also called the “gateway of the vajra” (*rdo rje'i sgo*) and refers to the reproductive organ of the male and that of the female. The anus (*bshang ba'i sgo*) is called the “gateway of what is not urine” (*chu min sgo*) or solid waste (*dri chen*). The crown of the head is called the “golden gateway” (*gser gyi sgo*). The mouth (*kha*) is called the “gateway of existence” (*srid pa'i skye sgo*) because the food that sustains the aggregates of existence is taken in through the mouth.

The nine are differentiated as the gateways of qualities (*yon tan gyi sgo*) and gateways of the faults of existence (*srid pa'i skyon gyi sgo*), or six good doors (*bzang po'i sgo*) and three bad doors (*ngan pa'i sgo*). Six of these gateways provide the ways to higher existences; and three gateways, the ways to three lower existences.

The exit of one's mind through the navel during transference practice or at death is prognostic of birth as a god in the realm of desire; exit through the forehead, birth as a god in the realm of form; exit through the crown of the head, birth in the formless realm; exit through the nostrils, birth as a *yaksha* on top of Mount Meru; exit through the ears, birth as a deity with special powers (the powers of the sword, the medicine, the pill, the netherworld, invisibility, moving instantaneously, flying, and seeing all places); and exit through the eyes, royal birth among humans.

The exit of the mind through the mouth is prognostic of birth in the realm of hungry spirits; though the urethra, birth in the animal realm; and through the anus, birth in the hell realm. See Bhavabhadrā's *Commentary on the Chatuhpitha*, Toh. 1607, vol. 'A, f. 260b; and Kalyanavarma's *Exposition of the Exalted Chatuhpitha*, Toh. 1608, vol. Ya, f. 60b1-61b3.

To close the gateways, Taranatha explains that one visualizes, as in the previous meditation, oneself as the female or male deity, and at the brahminical aperture, a yellow syllable that radiates light. One imagines that the light blocks the gateway at the crown of the head. One focuses on that light and applies the vase-shaped holding of the breath as specified in the instructions. One then visualizes a black syllable at the brow and performs the breath-control technique. Similarly, one visualizes a syllable in each of the eyes, in each ear, at the uvula, at the urethra, and at the anus, at each place a different syllable and of various colors. Except for the syllable at the uvula, the tops of the syllables face toward the inside of the body. At the neck, one visualizes a column of syllables, yellow on the right side and white on the left; similarly, at each of the two shoulders, the heart, and the navel, a column of syllables, one color on the right side and another on the left. All those columns stand upright. While visualizing those, each in turn, for seven days, one performs the specified mild vase-shaped holding of the breath. Then, whether the images of the syllables are clear or not, one visualizes all

of them, from the top of the body to the bottom and vice versa, and repeats that process for a long time until one can visualize the entire set of syllables all at once.

For the vajra recitation, having taken the proper posture, one does the two sealings of bliss and emptiness (as mentioned in the previous note) or a brief session of meditation on the phase of completion (as mentioned in the text). The bliss will bring about the sealing by itself; otherwise, one simply imagines that there is sealing by bliss. The phases of the breath are synchronized with the awareness of the sound of *hum* and the clear manifestation of the form of the deity as bliss; the sound of *ah* and all beings as bliss; and the sound of *om* and all appearances as bliss (a summary of Taranatha's *Chatuhpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 836.7-839.3).

- 4 The pervading phase of completion consists of two yogas: the yoga of the inconceivable (*bsam mi khyab kyī rnal 'byor*) and the action-seal yoga involving passion (*chags can las rgya'i lam*).

For the yoga of the inconceivable, one imagines oneself as the deity. At one's heart is a four-petalled lotus in the center of which is a blue sphere and on each of the other four petals, a sphere, each of a different color. One focuses on all of them together if possible; otherwise, each one individually. This visualization, accompanied by the inhalation, pause, and exhalation of the breath, brings about the experience of clarity. When there is some familiarity with that clarity, one focuses on a subtle sphere at the secret place, breathing naturally, and experiences bliss and emptiness, beyond center or periphery, as well as spontaneous, uncontrived nonconceptuality. Through the body of the deity arising as clarity, emptiness, and bliss, and being sealed by bliss and emptiness, all appearances are sealed. During this practice, one sits comfortably, eyes focused at the tip of the nose, and abandons all thoughts related to the past, present, and future.

Another aspect of this yoga of the inconceivable consists of the meditation in which inner and outer, subject and object, birth, cessation, and abiding, and so forth, are realized to be without inherent nature. One "searches for" the mind in order to realize its natural purity. Then, one continues to examine whatever arises. Although appearances never cease, one remains in awareness of the inexpressible nature of mind.

Once one has familiarized with those aspects, one intensifies awareness itself while gaining certainty of emptiness, the inner aspect—that one's mind is empty—and the outer—that objects are empty; and certainty that the inner and outer are of one nature. One cultivates bliss and clarity as before and trains in mixing those with nonconceptuality. By so doing, without relying on any external focus, everything—one-self, others, the universe and all beings—arises as bliss and emptiness. See Taranatha's *Chatuhpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 839.3-842.6.

The second yoga, the action-seal yoga involving passion, is the same as the secret fire offering (*gsang ba'i sbyin sreg*) or inner-fire offering (*nang gi sbyin sreg*). See Chapter 10, n. 8, concerning instructions called "coiled king of the *nagas*."

- 5 The pervaded completion phase consists of different sets of instructions—the bull's hoof (*ba lang rmig pa*), cow's udder (*ba nu lta bu*), bunch of plantain bananas (*chu shing snye ma*), and stupa-vase (*mchod rten bum pa*)—that form the root of the path. Their branches include miscellaneous instructions (*thor bu skor*), inner-fire rite (*me'i las*), transference (*'pho ba*), and the triad of illusions (*sgyu ma sum brgyud*). The instructions produce the experiences of bliss and emptiness by means of prac-

tices involving the four channel-wheels (navel, heart, throat, and crown of the head); breath techniques of inhaling, filling, pressing down, and expelling the winds; mixing the white and red vital essences, and so forth. These are related to the four seats: the seat of oneself, of others, of application, and of secret. See Kongtrul's *Sadhana of Lord Chatubpitha*, f. 20b3-5.

6 Read *rtsa ba la ba lang* for *rtsa ba ba lang*.

7 For the thirteen-syllable bull's hoof instruction (*ba lang rmig pa yi ge bcu gsum pa*), one first performs preliminary practices. Then, one imagines the syllables that are the natures of wind and fire, one above the other, at the sole of each foot. At the heart is an eight-petalled lotus, red, closed; and inside that, just above but not touching the corolla, a moon disk, in nature a vital-essence sphere. One visualizes above the moon any of five syllables, but usually a white *am* is visualized. Surrounding that are twelve vowels, red in color, in a counterclockwise arrangement. All together, there are thirteen syllables. The lotus at the heart is called "bull's hoof."

One expels the residual breath, applies the specified breath-control technique, and imagines that wind from the syllable at the sole of each foot stirs the syllable above it, causing fire to rise through the body, and so on, through the steps of the visualization. As one continues with the next phases of the breath control, the nectar of bodhichitta from eighteen places of the body flows to the crown of the head, then down through the uvula, and arrives just above the lotus of the heart, causing the lotus to open and the nectar to dissolve into the thirteen radiant syllables. One then performs the gentle-breath method while carrying out the subsequent steps, which include the visualization of two winds from the right and left channels striking the moon, the moon spinning, and so on. After the moon and the thirteen syllables melt and fill the lotus at the heart, one remains with the mind in a state of complete relaxation for some time. These steps constitute the thirteen-syllable practice.

The second, the two-syllable practice, is the same as the previous with the exception that, in addition to the syllable above the moon, one visualizes an inverted syllable at the uvula. The nectar gathers in the heart syllable and descends from that.

For the third, the single syllable, the visualization is similar to the first, except that at the heart is the syllable alone, without the moon, and there is no syllable at the uvula. As one applies the breath technique, the two winds (mentioned in the first meditation) strike the syllable, which melts and fills the bull's hoof.

For the fourth, the sphere alone, one does the above visualization but in place of the heart syllable one imagines only a white sphere. To the right of that is a black syllable, the nature of wind; to the left, a red one, the nature of fire. The nectar of bodhichitta from the crown of the head dissolves into the fire and wind (i.e., the two syllables). The red syllable dissolves into the black one, which dissolves into space.

See Taranatha's *Chatubpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 843.4-847.4. See also Kalyanavarman's *Exposition of the Exalted Chatubpitha*, Toh.1608, vol. Ya, f. 52a2-b3.

8 For the cow's udder, having done the preliminary visualization, one imagines the channel called "coiled king of the *nagas*" which resembles a coiled snake in seven rings and is located at a point below the navel. The tip of one end of the channel sits in the center and faces upward; the other end bends in the direction of the center, with its tip,

or “mouth,” touching the center and facing downward. Below the channel and above the channel-wheel of the secret place is a tetrahedron, color and dimension as specified in the instructions, inside of which is a red syllable that is the nature of fire and wind. At the brahminical aperture, there is a white syllable. At the level of the heart is a white syllable, in this practice called “stupa,” that is the nature of dripping nectar. At the soles of the feet are the syllables of wind and fire (as in the bull’s hoof visualization). One expels the breath and applies the specified breath-control technique so that the wind moves and the fire blazes upward, touching the syllable inside the tetrahedron from which light radiates. That light enters the lower door of the channel “coiled king,” fills it with light, and exits from its upper door.

As one continues with the next phases of the breath control, one carries out the subsequent steps of the instructions: imagining firelight pervading the whole body, the vital essences moving from the eighteen places up to the crown syllable, and so on, until nectar flowing from the heart syllable spreads to all the cavities of the channels and the pores of the skin.

At the conclusion one performs a four-syllable vajra recitation for which there are two variations: one is the “ceasing recitation” in which inhalation and exhalation are dispensed with; the other, a recitation synchronized with the rhythm of the breath (a summary of Taranatha’s *Chatuhpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 847.4-849.3).

- 9 In the instruction called “bunch of plantain bananas” (*chu shing snye ma*) or “plantain flower” (*chu shing me tog*), the first practice is that of the thirteen syllables. One imagines, at a point below the navel, the specified syllable, radiant with firelight. On the left side of the heart is a bent channel called “flower of the plantain banana,” five finger-widths in length, with a root that bends for the length of eight thumb-widths, red in color, its tip sharp. Inside that channel, one visualizes the thirteen syllables as set forth in the instructions and performs the specified form of breath control. Through a number of steps—the inner fire rising, nectar falling, etc.—the flower of the plantain banana opens up in the form of an eight-petalled lotus. In the middle of the lotus, in the midst of white light, is a white syllable; at the rim of the corolla are four syllables; on the four cardinal petals, another four syllables; and on the intermediate petals, four columns of syllables, all luminous white, thirteen in total. A flow of nectar descends from the crown, eventually spreading throughout the whole body, and so on, until all appearances become luminous. At the end of the session, one applies the vajra recitation.

For the nine-syllable practice, one does a similar visualization but without the syllables at the rim of the corolla of the lotus. In the center is one syllable; on the cardinal petals are four syllables; and on the intermediate petals, another four, a total of nine syllables.

As for the bird’s egg (*sgong skyes khyim*), Taranatha writes that this practice is related to the plantain-banana set but is not actually considered to be an element of it. For this, one imagines at one’s heart a red open lotus with eight petals. At the center is a white sphere like a small bird’s egg, and inside that sphere, a white syllable that is the nature of bliss. In ancient manuals of instructions, there is nothing more than that. However, the *Chatuhpitha Tantra* sets forth these details: at the sole of each foot, from the syllable that is the nature of wind, wind moves; and from the syllable that is

the nature of fire, fire blazes. As a result, nectar is drawn from all the parts of the body, which dissolves into the syllable and sphere at the heart. See Taranatha's *Chatuhpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 849.3-851.6. See also Bhavabhadra's *Commentary on the Chatuhpitha*, Toh. 1607, vol. 'A, ff. 259a3-260a3.

- 10 For the stupa-vase, there are two aspects: binding the winds and making the winds dissolve. For the first, one imagines oneself as Jñāneshvari. At one's heart or navel is a white lotus with eight petals. In the middle of that is a ball of light, egg-shaped. Inside is a luminous white syllable and on the four cardinal petals are four different syllables. These five syllables are the natures of the five buddhas. On the four intermediate petals are the syllables that are the natures of the four consorts, Lochana, and the others. At the level of the pelvis is a syllable, and one between the shoulder blades. The syllable at one's heart or navel is radiant with the light of fire. That light draws the subtle nectar from all parts of the body. The nectar dissolves into the ball of light at the heart (or navel). During this visualization, one performs the specified breath-control technique. Meditating in this way is effective for making the winds enter and abide in the central channel.

For the second aspect, making the winds dissolve, one first blocks the nine orifices. One visualizes the central channel from the crown to the secret place, with a syllable in the pelvic area and one between the shoulder blades. In the middle of the channel-wheel of the heart, which resembles a white lotus, is a white syllable in a ball of light, right within the central channel. On each of the four cardinal petals is a different syllable, and on each of the four intermediate petals, a column of syllables. One focuses on all of that as one performs the vase-shaped holding in the specified way. Winds arise from the syllables at the pelvis and the shoulders and strike the eight syllables, which then dissolve into emptiness. The central syllable becomes smaller and smaller and finally dissolves. One remains in a nonconceptual state (a summary of Taranatha's *Chatuhpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 851.6-855.7). See also Kalyanavarman's *Exposition of the Exalted Chatuhpitha*, Toh. 1608, vol. Ya, f. 68b6.

- 11 The miscellaneous instructions of the bull's hoof comprise several sequences of visualization. For one, a lotus with eight petals is imagined in the space in front of oneself. One does the visualization as for the bull's hoof, with the black syllable that is the nature of wind to the right, and the red syllable, the nature of fire, to the left. The wind moves and the fire blazes. The base of the fire, mixed with wind, is blue; the middle part, red; the tip, white. After meditating in that way for many days, one does the same visualization at the navel in conjunction with the vase-shaped holding. This is a form of inner-fire practice with the single channel-wheel.

Another visualization is that of an open lotus with eight petals at one's heart. In the central channel, where the channel is knotted, one carries out the visualization of the bull's hoof, in the middle of which is a tiny sphere, a mixture of wind and mind, and to the right, a black syllable, to the left, a red one. From the black syllable arises white fire that causes the red syllable to blaze. The fire rises through the central channel and reaches the head. The vital essence in the crown of the head melts and dissolves into the sphere at the heart. This is a form of inner-fire practice with two channel-wheels.

Another visualization is that of a red syllable inside the central channel at the heart. At the throat, brow, and brahminical aperture are different syllables. From the heart syllable arises fire, which penetrates the syllables at the throat and brow. Then the fire

reaches the white syllable at the brahminical aperture. The vital essence flows, filling the syllables at the brow, throat, and heart. This is a form of inner-fire practice with four channel-wheels.

Another visualization is that of a tiny sphere, engulfed in light, in each of three places: inside the empty cavity of the heart; inside the empty cavity of the skull; and inside the empty cavity of the brow. One imagines the syllables, and so forth, as in the bull's hoof.

Perfect pristine awareness is said to manifest by means of these miscellaneous instructions (a summary of Taranatha's *Chatuhpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 856.1-858.1).

- 12 The branches of the cow's udder include the rite of five fires. For this, one visualizes, above the secret place, a red tetrahedron with a yellow syllable inside. Below the navel is the channel "coiled king of the *nagas*" and above that the inner-fire *a*-stroke. At the level of the navel is a red eight-petalled lotus with a sun disk in the center. In the center is Jñaneshvari, the nature of the space element; to the east, Vajra Dakini, the nature of water; to the north, Fierce Dakini, the nature of fire; to the west, Zombi Dakini, the nature of wind; and to the south, Inner-Fire Dakini, the nature of earth. All are red (or the color specified in the *sadhana*) and stand in a mass of fire, each holding a skull-cup of blood. At the sole of each foot, one imagines a syllable from which wind moves and stirs the syllable in the tetrahedron. Fire rises through the coiled king of *nagas*, merges with the *a*-stroke, and so on, through the steps of the visualization, until the fire reaches the lotus at the navel. The inner fire forms a tent that contains the five dakinis. Its heat and light draw vital essences from the eighteen places to the crown of the head. These vital essences gather in a sphere (or syllable) at the crown, from which a flow of nectar descends and dissolves into the five dakinis. As a result, body and mind are pervaded by bliss. All of these steps are done in conjunction with the specified vase-shaped holding. At the end, one dissolves the visualization and performs the vajra breathing. These steps constitute the inner-fire rite.

As an extension of this practice, when eating, one does the visualization up to the five dakinis, purifies the food with the three-syllable mantra, takes the food in one's hands, and eats it while offering it to the deity at the navel. In some contexts, this offering would be an outer aspect; in others, an inner aspect. However, at this point of the phase of completion, it is considered outer, and the secret fire puja would be performed while relying on an action seal (a summary of Taranatha's *Chatuhpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 858.1-860.5).

- 13 The branches of the bunch of plantain bananas number four: the upward transference of consciousness (*gong du 'pho ba*); entering the deceased; knowing others' thoughts; and influencing others. The last three are considered accessory practices.

The first entails visualizing oneself as Jñaneshvari and applying the breathing technique while blocking the thirteen gateways. One's own mind is visualized as a white syllable at the navel and another upside-down syllable at the crown of the head. These two syllables are connected by a rope of light on which are mounted twenty-one lotuses, from the navel to the crown of the head, with the central channel running through the middle. As one exhales, one utters the specified sound, loudly and sharply, twenty-one times. Each time, the navel syllable ascends to the lotus above, eventually reaching the crown of the head and then returning to the navel. One per-

forms that visualization repeatedly until there arises the sign of the transference of consciousness. At the actual time of death, one's mind as the syllable at the crown of the head can be propelled wherever one wishes.

The second, entering the deceased, is carried out only when certain requirements are met: one has become adept at the vase-shaped holding and the inner-fire practice so that one is able to direct the white and red vital essences within the body; one has achieved some degree of clarity of the deity's body; one has given rise to the experience of everything being without inherent reality; and one has trained in the previous transference. One then performs the practice of one of the eight dakinis and makes supplications to her. If the dakini gives permission to do so, one may practice this form of transference with the guidance of a qualified master. If those requirements are not met, one's practice will not bring success.

For the third, knowing others' thoughts, one visualizes oneself as a deity with a white syllable at the heart. When that is stable, one visualizes the person whose thoughts one wishes to know as Vajrasattva and imagines that all sentient beings are unified in that person as Vajrasattva. A sphere of white light arises from the syllable at one's heart, issues forth from a nostril, enters the other person, and so on, finally returning to one's heart. One practices the sequence repeatedly. In conjunction with that, one mentally recites four syllables while meditating on the sameness of all phenomena. Moreover, one performs a vajra recitation of four syllables synchronized with the going and returning of the sphere of light.

For the fourth, influencing others, after having first performed the specified preliminaries, one imagines that at one's heart on a moon seat is a syllable, the light of which dissolves all appearances into emptiness. From that syllable, in three steps, one arises as the deity Jnaneshvari, with three faces and six arms. At the heart is the "banana flower," a white eight-petalled lotus with the specified syllable in the center and a different vowel on each petal. One imagines in front of oneself the person one wishes to influence, and one performs a four-syllable vajra recitation. From the nine syllables at one's heart arises a stream whose inner aspect is that of the syllables, and outer, that of bees. It exits one's right nostril, enters the other person, and so forth, finally returning to one's own heart. See Taranatha's *Chatuhpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 860.5-869.6. See also Kalyanavarman's *Exposition of the Exalted Chatuhpitha*, Toh. 1608, vol. Ya, ff. 61b1-62b5.

- 14 The branches of the stupa vase are related to three types of illusion: the illusion of waking-state appearances, that of dreams, and that of the intermediate state.

For the first, waking-state appearances, one imagines that at the navel of oneself as Jnaneshvari is a lotus with eight petals above a tetrahedron. On that lotus are five dakinis (as for the inner-fire rite described above), the central figure Jnaneshvari, a red syllable at her heart (or navel). One visualizes the channel "coiled king of *nagas*" and *a*-stroke, as described above. Through a number of steps, light is imagined to pervade the body and all of space, until everything—all outer and inner aspects—dissolves into the central Jnaneshvari, and she, into the syllable, which gradually dissolves into emptiness. One repeats that visualization many times. Finally, one remains for a long time in the state in which everything has vanished into luminous clarity, meditating on bliss and emptiness. After, without any intervening thoughts, one visualizes those outer and inner aspects as before, oneself as Jnaneshvari with the dakinis inside.

With strong conviction that everything is illusion, the indivisibility of appearance and emptiness, one trains in dissolving the appearances and emerging as the body of the deity. In the post-meditation period as well, one strengthens the conviction that everything is like an illusion.

For the illusion of dreams, there are five aspects of training: grasping dreams; purifying them; recognizing them; knowing them to be like illusions; and mixing dream practice with the luminous clarity of sleep. For the first, grasping the dream, one visualizes a lotus at one's throat, with the specified syllable at the center and a syllable on each of the four cardinal petals. Light from the central syllable strikes the four syllables, which then dissolve. This visualization is recalled as one is going to sleep. For the second, one develops the resolve to do this visualization in the dream and the ability to do so. For the third, one develops the resolve to be aware of dreams as dreams and the ability to do so. For the fourth, those of dull faculties must develop the resolve to experience dreams as illusion and the ability to do so, while those of sharp faculties experience this aspect naturally. The fifth, mixing dream practice with the luminous clarity of sleep, is included here but is also needed as an instruction on the illusion of the intermediate state. There are two instructions coming from this tantra: One instruction, mentioned in the context of the cow's udder, concerns developing the resolve to know dreams as dreams. One visualizes the syllable called "stupa" at the throat or secret place and imagines a descent of nectar. (The throat and secret place are crucial points in the dream practice and therefore needed as focal points, but in the context of the cow's udder, the crucial point is the heart.) For the second instruction, as a preliminary, one nurtures positive potential and pristine awareness in ways specified in the sadhana. Then, from emptiness, one imagines one's own mind as a white syllable on a moon and lotus. From that one arises in a rainbow-like body. Then, through a number of steps, one's own body is transformed into a stupa made of white light. One visualizes a lotus with eight petals at the level of the stupa vase. In the middle of the lotus is a luminous white syllable; below the vase, at a point about halfway down the basal tiers, are four syllables, and so on. One focuses on the various aspects of the visualization with the conviction that everything is merely a dream.

For the illusion of the intermediate state, the instruction amounts to the fifth part of the dream practice. Viewing the waking-state appearances as dreams carries over into the dream, and recognizing the nature of dream enhances one's experience in the waking state. At this point, one's practice is aimed at entering luminous clarity during sleep. That prepares one to recognize the illusion of the intermediate state and to enter luminous clarity.

In this tantra in particular, one applies the contemplations of successive destruction and total apprehension based on the instructions of the stupa vase. Through those, one enters luminous clarity and then arises in the form of the deity and trains in illusion. Having familiarized with that, one grasps the luminous clarity of sleep and trains in arising as a deity in dreams. Having become adept at that, one strengthens the conviction that everything is the intermediate state. This is considered the supreme instruction on the illusion of the intermediate state (a summary of Taranatha's *Chatuhpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 869.7-875.3).

15 For example, in the meditation of the bull's hoof, if one includes the yoga of the incon-

ceivable and the action-seal yoga involving passion as its branches, that bull's hoof becomes a complete path. The experience of clarity and emptiness that results from having made the winds and mind enter the central channel through the bull's hoof is transformed into the special melted bliss; all dispersed winds are drawn together and dissolved, and all channel-knots released. These effects arise due mainly to the action-seal yoga. The yoga of the inconceivable augments and stabilizes those effects through the sustained experience of pristine awareness in the dimension of nonconceptuality. Since those two (the yoga of the inconceivable and the action-seal yoga involving passion) are applied in each of the four pervaded aspects, they are designated as “pervading aspects” (a summary of Taranatha's *Chatuhpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 875.4–876.1).

- 16 The pristine awareness of warmth (*drod kyi ye shes*) refers specifically to the pristine awareness manifested on the first stage of the path of preparation called warmth (*drod*), which is a prelude to the actual pristine awareness of the path of seeing (*mtshong lam*). At the stage of pristine awareness of warmth, one has gained some degree of experiential understanding that everything is simply a projection of mind. See Longchenpa's *Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind*, vol. Kha, ff. 127a6–128b1.

The path of preparation (*sbyor lam*), the second of the five paths that form the Buddhist way to awakening, has four stages known as warmth (*drod*), peak (*rtse mo*), acceptance (*bzod pa*), and supreme worldly quality (*'jig rten chos kyi mchog*). See H. V. Guenther, trans., *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, pp. 232–233.

- 17 The esoteric instructions of the coiled king of the *nagas* (*klu dbang 'khyil ba'i man ngag, nagendrakundali*) are needed for the inner-fire rite in the context of the cow's udder and are applied to some extent in the context of the plantain banana. They constitute a special means of making the inner fire blaze at the navel (the “fire of Brahma”) (Taranatha's *Chatuhpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, p. 876.6–7). See also Bhavabhadrā's *Commentary on the Chatuhpitha Tantra*, Toh. 1607, vol. 'A, ff. 255b4–256a4.
- 18 The bull's hoof (*ba lang rmig pa*) derives its name from the knots of the central channel, primarily those at the heart, and secondarily those at the navel. The cow's udder (*ba nu lta bu*) derives its name from the channel-wheel at the crown of the head and the path of the uvula (*lce chung*). It can also refer to the tip of the secret place in both male and female. The bunch of plantain bananas (*chu shing snye ma*) or the plantain flower (*chu shing me tog*) derives its name from a channel in the middle of the heart. It corresponds to what other tantras call “spring.” The stupa-vase (*mchod rten bum pa*) is so called because the channel-wheel at the heart faces downward and the channel-wheel at the navel faces upward, and between them is what resembles a long cord. They are connected as well by other channels in what resembles the vase of a stupa (a summary of Taranatha's *Chatuhpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 876.7–878.4). See also Bhavabhadrā's *Commentary on the Chatuhpitha*, Toh. 1607, vol. 'A, ff. 254b2–262a7; and Kalyanavarman's *Exposition of the Exalted Chatuhpitha*, Toh. 1608, vol. Ya, ff. 51a4–52a1.
- 19 The *Chatuhpitha Tantra*, or *Vajra Chatuhpitha* is set forth in sixteen chapters, four for each of four seats: the seat of oneself (*bdag gi gdan*); the seat of other (*gzhan gyi gdan*); the seat of application (*sbyor ba'i gdan*); and the seat of the secret (*gsang ba'i*

gdan). In some contexts, the four seats are explained in terms of the three continuums, that of the cause, the method or path, and the result. See Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 294-295.

The name *Chatuhpitha* means “four seats.” Here, “seat” has the meaning of “abode,” that is, the sections of the text where the various meanings to be expressed (i.e., what “abides”) are found (in their “abodes”). *Vajra* (in *Vajra Chatuhpitha*) means “unchanging” and refers to the ultimate dimension of phenomena. The means to realize that *vajra* is also called *vajra*; therefore, the words that reveal that *vajra* constitute a “*vajra* seat” or “*vajra* abode.” “Oneself” (in “the seat of oneself”) refers to the ground of everything, the natural emptiness of all phenomena of cyclic existence. “Other” refers to the deity who is to be venerated and who appears to have a separate mind. “Application” refers to the applications of mantra and tantra in various forms. “Secret” means all the completion-phase yogas of the inner channels, winds, and vital essences (a summary of Taranatha's *Chatuhpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 880.1-884.7).

- 20 Read *gsang gdan* for *gsang ldan*. One line below (*IOK*, p. 251, last line), *brtan cing* is evidently a transcription error since suffix *na* should be followed by the particle *zhing*; we have been unable to verify our reading as *bstan zhing*.
- 21 The fire-offering rite of the ultimate reality (*de kho na nyid kyi sbyin sreg*) is the same as the practice of the inner-fire offering explained as a branch of the cow's udder. See Chapter 10, n. 12.
- 22 Above, the instruction is called the bunch of plantain bananas (*chu shing snye ma*); here, it is called the plantain flower (*chu shing me tog*).
- 23 This refers to the *Chatuhpitha Explanatory Tantra* (Toh. 430), vol. Nga.
- 24 *Mantramsha Explanatory Tantra of the Chatuhpitha* (Toh. 429), vol. Nga.
- 25 Nagarjuna's *Practice of the Armpit* (Toh. 1609), vol. Ya.
- 26 Aryadeva's *Single Tree Commentary on Difficult Points of the Glorious Chatuhpitha and Explanation of the Eight Topics Applied to the Inner Meaning* (Toh. 1614), vol. Ya.
- 27 Read *cher* for *tsher*.
- 28 Jetari's *Four Essential Principles of Chatuhpitha*, Toh. 1620, vol. Ya. Its author, Jetari, also known as Guhyajetari, was a lay master at Vikramashila monastery. He was tutored in the tantras by his father, Garbhapada, and studied with many other teachers. Moreover, he received instructions directly from Manjushri. He is known to have taught Shantipa and was the author of numerous works on sutra and tantra now preserved in the Tengyur. See Taranatha's *History of Buddhism in India* (English translation), pp. 290-292.
- 29 *Mother and Son Notes* (*yig chung ma bu*). Not identified.
- 30 Ngokpa (rNgog pa) or Ngoktön Chöku Dorjé (rNgog ston chos sku rdo rje) (1036-1122) was one of the four principal students of Marpa, the great forefather of the Kagyu lineage.

As to the transmission of this practice, there were two traditions in India: that of Aryadeva and that of Bhavabhadrā. In Tibet, the practice has been transmitted through three lineages: one derived from the tradition of Gö Khugpa Lhetsé ('Gos khug pa lhas btsas), based on the translations done by Smritijñāna; one derived from the tradition of the Indian Gayadhara and the Tibetan translator Drokmi, who also translated related texts; and the foremost one, derived from the tradition of Marpa, who heard the tantra and the explanation from the dakini named Adorned with Human Bones (Mi rus kyi rgyan can).

Taranatha writes that, at present, the complete and uninterrupted stream of initiations, explanations, and esoteric instructions for this tantra is that of the tradition of Marpa and Ngokpa (Taranatha's *Chatubpitha Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, p. 882.5-6).

- 31 The cycle of Mahamaya contained in the Kangyur and Tengyur includes the root tantra (Toh. 425) and the commentaries (Toh. 1622 to 1648).

Mahamaya (sGyu ma chen po), the central deity of this tantra, belongs to the vajra family and is depicted as the blue, four-faced, four-armed Vajradakā, in dancing mode, embracing his consort, Vajradakini, who resembles him. Four dakinis, one in each of the four cardinal directions, surround the central deity (Vajradakini's *Sadhana of Mahamaya*, Toh. 1626, vol. Ya. f. 226a6-b2).

- 32 Many traditions of the Mahamaya existed in India, such as those stemming from Vinayadatta and Ratnakarashantipa. The related texts were translated by Gö Lotsawa and Atisha and were also taught by them, but their lineages have vanished. Shantibhadra, an expert on Mahamaya who had gained realization through practice of that tantra, was a master of both Marpa and Gö Lotsawa. Marpa received the Mahamaya transmission from Shantibhadra, and its lineage of initiation, explanations, and essential instructions was passed on to Ngoktön and later to Taranatha.

The Marpa tradition of Mahamaya also draws from the tradition of Krishna, the essential instructions of Naropa, and so forth. In addition, Marpa heard various instructions on Mahamaya from other masters. Later, in a vision arising from pristine awareness, he received the transmission directly from Kukuripa (a summary of Taranatha's *Mahamaya Tantra Detailed Exegesis*, p. 542.1-6).

- 33 The phrase "yoga of reality (the ultimate)" (*mthar thug chos kyi rnal 'byor*) does not appear in the commentary in either edition of *IOK*. Because it appears in the root text, it has been added to the translation.

- 34 The Mahamaya phase of creation consists of the lesser yoga of shape, which has two aspects: the natural yoga of shape and the emanation yoga of shape. For the first, through a simple procedure of creation—the instantaneous method or creation from a seed-syllable—one performs deity yoga in which one meditates on Vajrasattva, the basis of the emanation. The second, regardless of whether one practices the long or the short version, is the meditation on the heruka or the dakini, which is the emanation itself.

The lesser yoga of shape definitely belongs to the creation phase alone, whereas the supreme yoga of shape definitely belongs to the phase of completion. However, for the actual practice of this tantra, one may visualize oneself in various forms, such as Vajra-

sattva, the male heruka in union, or the dakini Jnaneshvari (a summary of Taranatha's *Mahamaya Tantra Detailed Exegesis*, pp. 544-7-545-5).

- 35 The mantra yoga involving the channel-wheels (*'khor lo sngags kyi rnal 'byor*) comprises three practices that differ in the number of channel-wheels in the visualization.

For the mantra yoga of one channel-wheel, one adopts the seven-pointed posture of Vairochana, expels the residual breath three times, and breathes normally (these points of breath and posture are also applied in the next practices). In the center of the body, one visualizes the central channel and the two parallel channels on either side, their characteristics and colors as specified in the instructions. The upper tips of the three channels reach the crown of the head; the lower tips are inserted in a tetrahedron at the navel. Inside the lower tip of the central channel at the navel is the *a*-stroke; inside the right channel are the thirty-two consonants, arranged from top to bottom; and inside the left channel, the sixteen vowels arranged from bottom to top. Naropa notes that some Mahamaya experts state that the consonants are arranged from bottom to top; and the vowels, from top to bottom. In any case, one performs the specified breath-control technique as the upper and lower winds activate the *a*-stroke, which blazes slightly, and one imagines that one is experiencing warmth and bliss.

For the mantra yoga of two channel-wheels, the basic visualization is as just explained. In addition, one visualizes a white syllable *ham*, inverted, inside the central channel at the crown of the head. One applies the specified form of the breath-control technique. From the *a*-stroke, a thin orange flame rises, burning parts of the syllable at the head, and a thin stream of vital essence descends and dissolves into the fire.

For the mantra yoga of four channel-wheels, one visualizes the channel-wheels of the navel, heart, throat, and crown of the head. Each has four spokes, or "petals." Inside the central channel, at each of four places, the navel, throat, heart, and crown of the head, is a different syllable, the first two upright, the second two inverted. One visualizes the syllables in the right and left channels as described above while controlling the winds in the specified way. From the syllable at the navel, a very thin, sharp flame rises through the central channel and penetrates the syllables at the heart and throat. It presses on the syllable at the crown of the head, melting the vital essence, and so on, through the steps of the visualization, until the body is filled with bliss (a summary of Taranatha's *Mahamaya Tantra Manual of Instructions: The Excellent Path of the Victorious Ones*, pp. 812.1-813.5).

- 36 The mantra yoga of vital essences (*thig le sngags kyi rnal 'byor*) involves focusing on three points: the upper nose-tip, the lower nose-tip, and the center of the body.

For the first, the upper nose-tip, there are five cycles of visualization that stem from the different sadhanas, but their natures are identical. According to Shantipa's instructions, called the "esoteric instruction of the upper beads," one imagines at the heart channel-wheel an open lotus with a sphere on each of its four petals. On the corolla is a sun disk, the nature of fire and wind, and on that, a moon disk, the nature of earth and water. The sun and moon are joined together and between them is a sphere of vital essence, the size and color as specified in the instructions. The sun-and-moon union is entwined by a thin ray of light that resembles a spider's thread, forming three loops. At the level of the moon on top, on the three loops of the thread of light, are the vowels and consonants. On the right loop are consonants; on the central loop, vowels; and

on the left, consonants, as specified in the instructions. Those letters on the thread of light resemble beads on a rosary. In the center of the moon is a small hole through which one focuses intensely on the tiny sphere inside. Other authors explain the visualization in slightly different ways.

For the mantra yoga that focuses at the lower nose-tip, one imagines a tiny sphere of vital essence at the tip of the vajra of the male or at the secret channel-wheel of the consort. It rests on a single anther within a closed eight-petalled lotus, which sits between sun and moon disks, and is the nature of bliss. One performs the vajra recitation, synchronized with the movements, inward and outward, of the upper wind, while imagining the movements of syllables through the moon and vajra path.

For the mantra yoga that focuses on the center of the body, according to Kukuripa's middle-length *sadhana* of Mahamaya, one imagines at the crown of the head a green wind mandala, half-moon in shape; at the heart, a yellow earth mandala, square; at the navel, a white water mandala, round; and at the secret place, a red fire mandala, triangular. Above the wind mandala at the crown of the head is a sphere, and above that, an upside-down *ham*. The movement of the wind mandala causes the sphere to roll down to the heart and consume the earth mandala. Likewise, the sphere consumes the water mandala at the navel and the fire mandala at the secret place. As this occurs, the sphere becomes increasingly luminous. Then, it rolls back up to the crown of the head, and so on, through the steps of the sequence. The visualization is then synchronized with the breath as set forth in the instructions. Following that, one imagines that the sphere elongates (becoming like a thread of silk), its lower extremity extending to the lower tip of the central channel. At the level of the navel, that thread-like sphere divides into two branches that reach the nostrils. Synchronized with the phases of the breath, one imagines that from the navel a syllable rolls upward along the right branch and exits from the right nostril, and so on, through the steps of the visualization. See Taranatha's *Mahamaya Tantra Manual of Instructions: The Excellent Path of the Victorious Ones*, pp. 813.5-818.5.

- 37 For the mantra yoga of the subtle (*phra mo sngags kyi mal 'byor*), there are three aspects: training in the natural flow of the winds (*rlung rgya yan la bslab pa*); training in counting the numbers of breaths (*brtsi bgrang la bslab pa*); and training in the vase-shaped holding of the breath (*bum can la bslab pa*).

The first has two aspects: training in the natural flow of winds, for which, as one exhales, one imagines that illnesses, suffering, aging, and death are expelled, and as one inhales, that life span, positive potential, and physical radiance are increased; and the vajra breathing, in which the rhythm of the breath is synchronized with the awareness of the three syllables *om*, *hum*, and *ah*.

The second, training in breath counting, has three aspects: First, one counts each exhalation and inhalation as one, in sets of ten, doing that many times. Second, one repeats the previous aspect while performing vajra breathing. Third, one repeats the previous aspect while visualizing a white *hum* on a moon disk at one's heart. From that syllable issues forth a thread of light with *om* at its tip. One imagines that this thread of light encircles the syllable on the moon seven times clockwise, then unravels, moves upward, exits from the nostrils along with the breath, and so on, through the steps of the sequence, which is carried out ten times.

The third, training in the vase-shaped holding of the breath, has two aspects: a

gradual halting; and a forceful halting. For the first, one adopts the appropriate posture and expels the residual breath ten times with a long sound, followed immediately by inhalation and the bringing together of the upper and lower winds through the steps of the technique. One focuses on the meeting of the winds and brings to mind bliss and heat. For the second, the forceful halting, one does a forceful form of the vase-shaped holding while in “lion’s mode.” However, this is not done more than a few times in a session (a summary of Taranatha’s *Mahamaya Tantra Manual of Instructions: The Excellent Path of the Victorious Ones*, pp. 818.5-819.7).

- 38 The common practice of the ultimate yoga of reality (*mthar thug chos kyi rnal ’byor thun mong ba*) has two aspects: using the natural state as the path (*rang bzhin lam khyer*); and using appearances as the path (*snang ba lam khyer*). To use the natural state as the path, having adopted the proper physical posture, one relaxes the mind in its natural state and looks directly at mind nature. An indescribable clarity will manifest, whereupon one remains in a state of meditative equipoise. To use appearances as the path, one looks directly at the various manifestations of the six consciousnesses and recognizes that they are merely appearances. With that knowledge, and without trying to modify anything, one experiences what arises as manifestations of the inseparability of appearance and emptiness.

In the uncommon practice of the ultimate yoga of reality (*mthar thug chos kyi rnal ’byor thun mong ma yin pa*), one uses the natural state as the path by implementing the bliss derived from mantra yoga. Recognizing the mind as the inseparability of bliss and emptiness, one remains in contemplation. One uses appearances as the path by sealing the appearances of the six consciousnesses with the mind of inseparable bliss and emptiness. All appearances thereby manifest as bliss (a summary of Taranatha’s *Mahamaya Tantra Manual of Instructions: The Excellent Path of the Victorious Ones*, pp. 819.7-820.5)

- 39 The triad of illusions (*sgyu ma sum brgyud*) refers to the illusions of daytime, or waking-state appearances (*snang ba sgyu ma*), the illusions of dreams (*rmi lam sgyu ma*), and the illusions of the intermediate state (*bar do sgyu ma*).

The instructions on the illusions of waking-state appearances are to meditate on oneself and all appearances as the mandala of Mahamaya and to develop strong conviction that all these appearances are merely manifestations of one’s mind and that whatever appears has no inherent existence but is illusory in nature.

The instructions on the illusions of dreams consists of three parts: grasping the dream state; purifying the images of the dream; and integrating the dream practice with luminous clarity (i.e., entering luminous clarity in the dream). For the first, one visualizes a four-petalled lotus at the throat, with the specified syllable at its center and one on each of the four petals. Before going to sleep one resolves to recognize the dream. For the second, once one can recognize dreams as dreams, one resolves to transform the appearances of that night’s dream into the mandala of Mahamaya. During the day, one meditates that all waking-state appearances are the mandala. At night, as the illusory appearances of the dream begin to manifest, one brings to mind the Mahamaya mandala, thereby transforming the dream images into the mandala. For the third, during the day and right into the evening, one strongly resolves to apply the mantra yoga and the reality yoga in the dream state and thereby enter luminous clarity. To use the mantra yoga in dream, one recollects the instructions as one starts to dream, meditates on a sphere of vital essence at the heart, and as the appearances of

dream vanish, enters luminous clarity. By applying the yoga of reality, one sustains the contemplation of luminous clarity for longer periods.

The instructions on the illusions of the intermediate state also consist of three parts: grasping, purifying, and integrating. For the first, during the day, one develops the strong conviction that all waking-state appearances are intermediate-state appearances. When going to sleep, one resolves to view all dream appearances as those of the intermediate state. To consistently grasp the dream as the intermediate state amounts to grasping the intermediate state itself. For purifying the intermediate state, having developed the conviction that all waking-state appearances are intermediate-state appearances, with the resolve to transform these illusory appearances into forms of the deity and the mandala, one imagines oneself as the Heruka in union with consort, the environment as a celestial palace, and all sentient beings as Mahamaya with consort, or as one's teacher with consort. Here, as for the previous, it is very important to develop a strong conviction that everything is without inherent reality. For integrating, one applies the instructions of dream practice as they relate to the intermediate state, thereby developing the ability to enter luminous clarity in sleep in order to eventually recognize the luminous clarity at death (a summary of Taranatha's *Mahamaya Tantra Manual of Instructions: The Excellent Path of the Victorious Ones*, pp. 820.5-822.2).

- 40 Six oral essential instructions (*gdams ngag bka' drug*) and the six collections of activation rites based on meditative absorption (*bsam gtan gyi las tshogs drug*) are instructions related to magical activities, such as fierce rites to be used to dispel serious interferences, taught in the two latter chapters of this tantra. See Taranatha's *Mahamaya Tantra Detailed Exegesis*, p. 591.1-4.
- 41 *Mahamaya Tantra* (Toh. 425), vol. Nga, f. 167b7.
- 42 Mixing (*bsre*) and transference (*'pho*). See Chapter 8, "The Hevajra Completion Phase," section entitled "The Fifth."
- 43 *Mahamaya Tantra* (Toh. 425), vol. Nga, f. 168a3. The six lines read: *a li ka li mnyam byas te/ ri mo de la sbyar bar bya/ ri mo steng tu 'bar bar mthar/ 'og tu 'babs par byed pa'o/ khu ba'i tshul gyis 'babs pa ste/ bdud rtsi'i thigs pa'i gzugs las so*. For an explanation of the words of the citation, see Krishnasamayavajra's *Commentary on the Mahamaya Tantra: Recollection* (Toh. 1624), vol. Ya, f. 206a5-b5.
- 44 *Mahamaya Tantra* (Toh. 425), vol. Nga, f. 168a6. For an explanation of the words of the citation, see Krishnasamayavajra's *Commentary on the Mahamaya Tantra: Recollection*, Toh. 1624, vol. Ya, f. 207b3-4.
- 45 *Mahamaya Tantra* (Toh. 425), vol. Nga, f. 169a7. The Dergé Kangyur edition reads: *gong bur song ba'i yid de yis* ("through the mind that has entered the sphere"). *IOK* reads *gong bur sad pa'i 'od de yi*. For an explanation of the words of the citation, see Krishnasamayavajra's *Commentary on the Mahamaya Tantra: Recollection* (Toh. 1624), vol. Ya, f. 212b5-6; and Ratnakarashanti's *Commentary on the Mahamaya* (Toh. 1623), vol. Ya, f. 195b1-2.
- 46 *Mahamaya Tantra* (Toh. 425), vol. Nga, f. 168b5. Read *dang po'i yi ge'i sbyor ba yis*. See Ratnakarashanti's *Commentary on the Mahamaya*, Toh. 1623, vol. Ya, f. 192a1-b1.
- 47 *Mahamaya Tantra* (Toh. 425), vol. Nga, f. 169a6. The term for exhalation and inha-

lation here is *srog rtsol*. Ratnakarashanti explains that *srog* means exhalation; *rtsol*, inhalation (Ratnakarashanti's *Commentary on the Mahamaya*, Toh. 1623, vol. Ya, f. 194b4). Taranatha writes that, according to the instructions of the earlier masters, the breath moving outward is *srog*; the breath moving inward, *rtsol*. According to Krishnacharya, *srog dang rtsol ba* means wind (*prana*); and *srog rtsol*, when referring to practice, is a name for the yoga of the winds. The *Commentaries by the Bodhisattvas* and other works explain that *srog* means "wind"; and *rtsol*, "to halt." What is meant here, however, is the halting of the winds through the application of the vase-shaped holding (Taranatha's *Mahamaya Tantra Detailed Exegesis*, p. 641.4-5).

48 *Mahamaya Tantra* (Toh. 425), vol. Nga, f. 169a5. See Ratnakarashanti's *Commentary on the Mahamaya*, Toh. 1623, vol. Ya, f. 194b2.

49 *Mahamaya Tantra* (Toh. 425), vol. Nga, f. 168a4. See Ratnakarashanti's *Commentary on the Mahamaya*, Toh. 1623, vol. Ya, f. 89a6-b1.

50 *Mahamaya Tantra* (Toh. 425), vol. Nga, f. 169a7. See Ratnakarashanti's *Commentary on the Mahamaya*, Toh. 1623, vol. Ya, f. 195a.

51 *Mahamaya Tantra* (Toh. 425), vol. Nga, f. 170b4. Krishnasamayavajra explains that "the supreme three dimensions (*sku gsum*) are bestowed" means that one acquires the perfect ability to grant mundane powers and the ultimate power of awakening, in accordance with the wishes of all beings, due to attainment of the dimension of reality (*dharmakāya*), the dimension of enjoyment (*sambhogakāya*), and the manifest dimension (*nirmāṇakāya*) of awakening (Krishnasamayavajra's *Commentary on the Mahamaya*, Toh. 1624, vol. Ya, f. 217a5-6). In other words, the instructions bring about the attainment of the three dimensions.

Taranatha explains that the clarity of the mandala of the deity is the manifest dimension; the bliss in which mind, winds, and vital essences are altered, the dimension of enjoyment; and the nonconceptuality of emptiness, the dimension of reality (a summary of Taranatha's *Mahamaya Tantra Detailed Exegesis*, pp. 671.7-672.2).

52 Warmth (*drod*) refers to the stage of warmth on the path of preparation as delineated in the tantric path. Generally, that stage is attained when, by gathering winds and mind in the central channel during the completion phase, one realizes the small, middling, and great degrees of pristine awareness of bliss and emptiness. Thus, the stage of warmth is distinguished according to three degrees, the lesser warmth (*drod chung ngu*), middle warmth (*drod 'bring*), and great warmth (*drod chen po*). The realization of the lesser warmth of the phase of completion allows one to engage in the tantric activities (*spyod pa*) specified for the phase of completion. The realization of the great warmth allows one to apply the completion-phase practices with a consort. As one arises from the final-example luminous clarity of the great full culmination, one attains the body of wind and mind. This is posited as the peak (*rtse mo*) stage of the path of preparation.

53 The cycle of the Buddhakapala (Sangs rgyas thod pa) as contained in the Kangyur and Tengyur includes the root tantra (Toh. 424) and the three commentaries (Toh. 1652, written by Saraha; Toh. 1653, by Padmavajra; and Toh. 1654, by Abhayakara-gupta, which Taranatha declared to be the best). In addition, Saraha composed a

sadhana (Toh. 1655); a sacrificial food offering to spirits (Toh. 1656); and a mandala rite (Toh. 1657).

The central deity of this tantra is blue, with one face and four arms. In his right hands, he holds a curved knife and skull-cup; in his left hands, staff and vajra. He embraces his consort Blissful (sNa tshogs bde ma) (also known as Samantabhadri). She is red, with one face and four arms. In her right hands, she holds a small drum and curved knife; in her left, staff and skull-cup (Saraha's *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Buddhakapala*, Toh. 1652, vol. Ra, f. 220b1). The colors of the two deities and their insignia can vary. See Taranatha's *Buddhakapala Tantra Sadhana Ritual*, pp. 692.5-693.1.

- 54 Saraha, also known as Brahmana Rahula, was born in Orissa. As a child, he became extremely learned in the traditional knowledge of his time. On one occasion, while teaching other brahmin youths, he was offered the nectar of wisdom in the form of beer by Vajrayogini in the guise of a barmaid. He drank without hesitation. Because of this, the brahmins tried to dishonor him but were not successful. He later became a monk in central India and studied with Avitarka. Saraha soon was considered the monk most knowledgeable of Buddhist doctrine. It is said, however, that he learned the sutras and tantras mainly through mystic encounters with Vajrapani and other deities. He eventually became abbot of Nalanda where he greatly propagated the path of the universal way. Then, aspiring for authentic experience, he became a wanderer. In the course of his travels, he met a yogini who was a fletcher's daughter. She introduced him to the true meaning of the teachings. He relied on her as his consort while doing the work of a fletcher. At one time, a king, wishing to test his knowledge, journeyed with his attendants to meet Saraha, who then revealed his high state of realization through mystic songs. He is known to have been the tantric master of Nagarjuna, as well as the preceptor from whom Nagarjuna received monk's ordination. For details of his life, see Taranatha's *Histories of the Masters of the Seven Transmissions*.
- 55 For the practice of the yoga of the subtle completion phase, first of all one recites a mantra for protection. Then, in an instant, one visualizes oneself as Buddhakapala, blue in color, one face, four arms, in dance posture, left leg extended, on a seat of lotus, sun, and corpse. The ancient sadhanas and esoteric instructions describe his hair as yellow and flying upward. However, Abhayakara's commentary describes his hair as resembling that of Chakrasamvara. He has six bone ornaments and a necklace of heads, and he embraces his consort Blissful who is red and without ornaments.

For the actual practice of the yoga of the subtle, one applies the four yogas of wind. The first is called the "finest particle" (*rdul mtha' can*), the name referring to the out-breath phase of the method, which is done very slowly and without sound, in an uninterrupted stream, stirring not even "the finest particle." The second is called "filling up" (*gang ba can*), referring to the in-breath phase, done very slowly and without sound. The third is called "stiffening" (*rengs ba can*), which means to "freeze" the wind, meaning that one halts the out-breath for a time. (For these first three, in conjunction with the coming and going of the breath, one visualizes light coming and going). The fourth is called the "vase-shaped holding" (*bum pa can*), which is done following training in the gentle-wind technique, without sound. The name "vase-shaped holding" refers to the shape of the union of the upper and lower winds at the

navel. As one inhales, one imagines that the upper wind in the body, in the form of light, gathers at the navel. As one draws up the downward-voiding wind, one imagines that the lower wind, in the form of light, gathers at the navel. The union of the winds at the navel forms a vase-like shape (a summary of Taranatha's *Buddhakapala Tantra Instructions on the Completion Phase*, pp. 742.3-744.2).

- 56 For the vital-essence yoga of the inner-fire practice, done in conjunction with vajra recitation, there are three aspects:

For the first, one visualizes three channels and four channel-wheels. The central channel, the size of an average arrow, is blue, the upper tip reaching the crown of the head, the lower tip reaching four finger-widths below the navel. The right channel is red; the left, white, their lower tips inserted in the lower tip of the central channel; and upper tips, in the two nostrils. One visualizes the navel channel-wheel (called "emanation") with sixty-four spokes or "petals," yellow, with the specified syllable, blue, on a sun disk at its center, inside the central channel; the heart channel-wheel (called "phenomena") with eight spokes, blue, with a black syllable on a moon disk at its center inside the central channel; the throat channel-wheel (called "enjoyment") with sixteen spokes, red, with a red syllable at its center inside the central channel; and the crown channel-wheel (called "great bliss") with thirty-two spokes, white, with an inverted white syllable at its center inside the central channel. At the anus is a mandala of wind, blue, half-moon in shape, and on that, a mandala of fire, red, triangular. One clears out the residual breath with sounds, as described in the instructions. One then applies the specified breathing method, imagining that the upper wind flows through the right and left channels and enters the lower tip of the central channel. By manipulating the downward-voiding wind, one causes the wind at the anus to move and the fire (of the fire mandala) to blaze. The mixture of fire and wind enters the central channel and touches the syllable at the navel. As a result, a blue flame from the inner fire, extremely hot, rises through the central channel to touch the syllable at the heart. Infinite light radiates from the heart, filling all of the 72,000 channels of the body and melting the vital essence contained in them. The light issues forth from the pores of the skin and gathers the pure essences of the bodies, voices, and minds of all sentient beings, along with the essences of the elements, earth, etc. These enter through the pores of one's skin, gather at the crown of the head, and so on, through the steps of the visualization, finally dissolving into the heart syllable.

For the second aspect of the vital-essence practice of inner fire, one does the previous visualization up to the light issuing from the pores of the skin. Then, the pure essences of the universe and all beings enter the crown of one's head, descend through the central channel, and so on. The meeting place of the flame and the vital-essence flow is at the heart. Throughout this visualization, one applies the vase-shaped holding.

For the third aspect, the visualization is as for the previous, except that the meeting point of the flame and flow is at the navel. One applies the vase-shaped holding.

For all three aspects, one may apply the vajra recitation, in which case one would dispense with the vase-shaped holding and breathe normally. Synchronized with the phases of the breath, one focuses, in turn, on the inner fire blazing; vital essence descending; and the meeting point of flame and flow. This describes the vital-essence yoga of the inner fire for which one's own body is used as method (a sum-

mary of Taranatha's *Buddhakapala Tantra Instructions on the Completion Phase*, pp. 744.3-747.2).

- 57 After having meditated for a long time on any of the previous three aspects of inner-fire practice, if one has not been able to manifest the pristine awareness of bliss and warmth, one must apply the enhancement practice related to the winds, for which there are three parts: gathering the winds at the entrance to the central channel; opening the entrance to the central channel; and applying a forceful method.

For the first, gathering the winds at the entrance to the central channel, there are two steps: The first entails a breath technique while maintaining the physical posture of the legs in the bodhisattva mode, hands on knees, and back straight. After expelling the residual breath, one immediately draws in the upper wind, manipulates the lower wind, and so on, through the steps of the technique, which cause the winds to gather at the entrance to the central channel. For the second step, in the same physical posture as the previous, one imagines that, as one exhales, the central channel collapses. One repeats that many times.

For the second, opening the entrance to the central channel, there are two steps: The first involves the same physical posture and manipulation of the upper and lower winds as done in the previous. The second requires one to place the knees on the ground, clasp the hands together in the area just above the kidneys, and draw up the wind into that area. The rest is the same as the previous practice. Finally, as one breathes out, one manipulates the head and trunk according to the instructions. In that way, the entrance to the central channel is opened.

For the third, applying a forceful method, there are two steps: The first entails being in squatting position, performing the specified vase-shaped holding of the breath, and so forth. The second entails physical manipulation, with each hand, in turn, folded in a vajra fist and tucked into the opposite armpit, whereby the left armpit and then the right are filled with wind. These are the two steps in the forceful method by which the winds can be directed to the left and right. During the two vase-shaped holdings, one performs one vajra breathing of eleven syllables: as one breathes in slowly, one imagines that the inhalation is accompanied by the sound of *om*; as the breath pauses in the center of the body, the sound of *hri*; and so on. See Taranatha's *Buddhakapala Tantra Instructions on the Completion Phase*, pp. 747.2-749.4.

- 58 For the yoga of withdrawal, one assumes the physical posture specified in the instructions, keeps the eyes focused wherever suitable, above, below, or straight in front, and remains in an uncontrived state of clarity, without any movement of thought. For the yoga of meditative absorption, one remains without contrivance or modification, free from reaction to anything that arises, understanding that all experiences are simply manifestations of the mind. These two teachings are elucidated in Saraha's *Songs* (a summary of Taranatha's *Buddhakapala Tantra Instructions on the Completion Phase*, pp. 749.5-750.1).
- 59 The contemplation of the seal of empty form in this tantra corresponds to that of the Kalachakra. See Chapter 8, section entitled "Recollection."
- 60 See Chapter 8, n. 74.
- 61 The tantras of Tara in the highest yoga tantra section of the Dergé Kangyur are two:

The Ultimate Essence of Tara, Origin of All Rites, King of Yogini Tantras, Toh. 448, vol. Ca; and *The Ultimate Essence of the Origin of All Rites*, Toh. 449, vol. Ca. The second is a continuation of the first.

The first of the tantras was translated by Buddhanatha, Nirvanashri, and Taranatha, and revised by Purnavajra; the second, translated by Buddhanatha, Nirvanashri, Taranatha, and Purnavajra. Taranatha also wrote a commentary on the first called *Tara Tantra Commentary*, a discussion of how the tantra fits into the category of highest yoga tantra, as well as an elucidation called *Radiant Lamp* (*sgrol ma 'byung ba'i rgyud kyi bsduṣ don gsal ba'i sgron me*). In the colophon to his translation of *The Ultimate Essence of Tara*, Taranatha writes:

Having received this tantra from the great adept Buddhanatha, who was born in South India, and then again from the Indian scholar Nirvanashri, I, the vagabond, translated it in accordance with the *Commentary on the Difficult Points* by the great Indian scholar Naraditya, considering it my duty to do so. Later, at the feet of the scholar Purnavajra and in accordance with the extensive commentary of Dipamkarashrijnana, I revised that tantra somewhat. Then, in keeping with the great oral tradition of Shantigupta and relying on a large body of notes from the oral transmission of Shantigupta, and in particular, in accordance with the “Great Guru from the South,” Buddhanatha, I corrected and refined it.

In the colophon to his translation of *The Ultimate Essence of the Origin of All Rites*, Taranatha writes:

I have studied this tantra in detail under the venerable Buddhanatha, the worthy one of realization, wise in the indestructible way (*vajrayana*), who was born in the locality of Rameshvara. The straightforward parts I translated based on my own knowledge. The difficult parts I had to revise many times with the help of my notes and a great deal of research. I later made my final translation with the help of the Indian scholar Nirvanashri and the scholar Purnavajra, relying thoroughly on their individual explanations. (TBRC, W22276, vol. 2302, pp. 326-327)

According to Taranatha, these tantras are parts of a much larger tantra, no longer extant. There is also a tantra of Tara contained in the *kriya* tantras in the Kangyur, with a similar title: *Tantra of Tara, Mother of All Buddhas: Origin of Various Rites* (*De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi yum sgrol ma las sna tshogs 'byung ba zhes bya ba'i rgyud*) (Toh. 726). This tantra was translated into Tibetan by Chökyi Zangpo and the Indian Dharmashrimitra. Part of that Tibetan text has been translated into English by Martin Willson in *In Praise of Tara*. Although this tantra is listed in the Tohoku catalogue, it is not found in the set of the Dergé Kangyur, rGyud 'bum division, kept at Kalu Rinpoche's monastery in Sonada, West Bengal.

- 62 The root text mentions only three yogas. The third yoga, the surpassing yoga (*shin tu rnal 'byor*), is absent from the root texts in both editions of *IOK*.
- 63 The related aspects (*'khor*) of the phase of creation are meditations such as the wheel of protection that do not exactly pertain to creation-phase meditations that accord in features with death, the intermediate state, and birth.

- 64 For the burning away of negative karma (*sdig pa sreg pa*), one imagines oneself as the pledge being, or just in ordinary form. At one's heart, in the middle of the channel-wheel of phenomena, sits radiant white Tara with four arms. In her heart is a moon disk with *tam* surrounded by her mantra. The mantra syllables blaze with white fire, which pervades the body of the pristine-awareness being (Tara herself) as one repeats the mantra. Gradually, that fire spreads throughout three channels and the five channel-wheels so that one's body, inside and outside, blazes with white fire that consumes all negative karma and obstacles. Then, the flames enter all sentient beings by way of their nine orifices. As a result, a sphere at the heart of each being becomes in essence a mass of white fire, which pervades the entire body, burning away all of that being's negative karma and obstacles. Finally, all fires merge with the fire at one's heart (a summary of Taranatha's *Tara Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 761.4-762.4).
- 65 For the averting of obstacles (*bar chad zlog pa*), one imagines that at one's own heart is the pristine-awareness being, Tara herself, as described in the previous note. At her heart is the contemplation-being, the syllable *tam*, green, blazing with radiant fire, which enters and pervades the three channels and four channel-wheels. One visualizes all illnesses, harm-doers, obstacles, and so forth, being consumed by fire, reduced to ashes, and scattered by the wind, or driven out through the pores of the skin. The mantra is repeated during the visualization (a summary of Taranatha's *Tara Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 762.5-763.3).
- 66 For the yoga through which the blessing enters oneself (*byin rlabs 'jug pa'i mal 'byor*), one imagines that the pure essence of the right channel, which includes the inner fire at the navel, becomes a sun at the center of the channel-wheel of phenomena. The pure essence of the left channel, which includes *ham* at the crown of the head, becomes a moon at the center of the heart. Between the sun and moon is the indestructible wind, the green syllable *tam*. From the merging of sun, moon, and *tam* one arises as Tara, with four arms. At the heart on a moon is green *tam* radiating light. At the forehead is *om*; at the throat, *ab*; and just below the channel-wheel of the heart, *hum*. Without distraction, one mentally recites the four syllables. Following that, one visualizes the vajra tent of protection (a summary of Taranatha's *Tara Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 763.3-764.7).
- 67 For the preliminary practice of the subsequent yoga, one assumes the seven-pointed posture of Vairochana, with eyes focused at the tip of the nose. One visualizes inside the nose an orange light resembling smoke with sparks. Alternatively, the eyes are focused at the root of the nose (between the eyebrows), where one visualizes a white sphere, very luminous. If one is not comfortable with either of those two methods, one focuses the eyes at a point in space one hand-span or one cubit from the brow. One remains in the natural state without the slightest projection of thought. These methods result in the arising of many favorable signs, the alleviation of sickness, stabilizing of vital essence, and development of the contemplation of calm abiding.

The main practice of remaining in the equipoise of naturally pure reality depends on one's having achieved a stable contemplation of calm abiding, which is the basis of the yoga. The mind is directed inward, in the manner of recognizing one's own awareness. In other words, one looks straight at mind, remaining in the contemplation of unceasing awareness-emptiness, a state beyond description that recognizes mind as

naturally present. Whatever thoughts or appearances arise, from the very moment of their occurring, one recognizes their essence as naturally present.

The enhancement practice of this tantra has two main aspects: enhancement through the methods of the retention mantras; and enhancement by means of the yoga for conquering demonic forces. The first has many categories in which are included nine esoteric instructions on the methods of the retention mantras.

The first method, the retention mantra of unborn *a*, is to focus the mind at the center of the heart and to imagine the sound of the syllable *a*. One then examines the essence of that sound. It does not manifest as an object to the five senses, nor does it exist anywhere outside or inside the body; it is therefore beyond definition. One focuses directly on this clear arising of the sound, always aware that the sound does not exist in its own right. Then one makes the sound and examines whether there is a relation between that sound and the sound that one has focused on during practice. One understands that the utterance is a separate sound and that these two have no relation. Since the syllable *a* is the root of all syllables, when one understands that it is without inherent nature, one understands that all sound and speech are empty. If one has not ascertained that that is so, one should apply the method to other terms or names, according to the instructions.

The second method is the retention mantra of *hum*. Within the state of calm abiding, one focuses the mind inside the body as one emits the sound of a long *hum*. One then cultivates the five pristine awarenesses: To remain free of thoughts, without creating anything, is the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena. To focus directly on the essence of the mind while being in that state is the mirror-like pristine awareness. To look straight at inner and outer phenomena—the body and mind and all that arises—and simply to relax without effort is the sameness pristine awareness. After the body of the deity suddenly manifests as clarity and emptiness, to remain without modifying anything is the pristine awareness of discernment. To meditate on intense compassion for all sentient beings while sustaining the previous state is the pristine awareness of accomplishment. One contemplates each of those five for a short time—about the time it takes to eat a morsel of food. As one shifts from one to the next, one emits a long *hum*. Then, one returns to the original state of calm abiding with the sound of a long *hum* and remains in that way for a long time. Through this, one gains the capacity to carry out various visualizations in every instant.

The third method is the retention mantra of *pat*. When, from within the state of calm abiding, there arises a stimulus for thoughts, one resolves to restore the calm state by saying the syllable *pat*. When a thought does arise, one does not intentionally cut the thought but simply utters the syllable sharply. As the thought vanishes, one does the same. In short, whether there is an occasion for the arising of a thought or for the cessation of one, one reacts in no way but simply brings to mind that syllable and says it loudly.

The fourth method is the retention mantra of *kam*. Whenever there arise strong thoughts that adhere to characteristics as inherently real, one meditates on all things as space. For example, when one sees a person and discerns that it is a person, one utters *kam* and imagines that the person vanishes into space. Then one remains for a while in meditation. In the same way, one applies the meditation to all objects that are apprehended as something real and, in particular, all objects and events that produce

emotional reactions—the “highs and lows” of pleasure, pain, joy, sadness, fear, anxiety, shame, pride, and so forth.

The fifth method is the retention mantra of *ab*. For this, while uttering the sound of *ab*, one looks straight at the essence of both sides of dualistic appearances and thereby destroys duality through the understanding of sameness. In other words, when suddenly there arises the impression of two, for example, oneself and an enemy, one looks directly at the two aspects and remains in the state in which the conceptual characteristics that define those two collapse. By applying that meditation to all factors—good and bad, high and low, big and small, favorable and unfavorable, right and left, center and extreme, pleasant and unpleasant—one comes to realize their sameness.

The sixth method is the retention mantra of *ya*, for which one imagines a mandala of wind and utters the syllable *yam*. One focuses on one’s abode, whatever its size, color, or shape, and examines whether it exists as something apart from one’s mind. Other than being something that merely appears, it doesn’t have any inherent reality at all. Understanding that, one remains in meditation on clarity and emptiness. Then, one focuses on the tactile sensation of wind by allowing the breeze coming in from a window to strike one’s body, and one trains in mixing one’s mind with the sensation of the lightness and softness of the wind. From time to time, one imagines that one’s own body dissolves into that sensation of the wind, and while repeating the syllable, one remains in meditation without thoughts.

The seventh method is the retention mantra of *ra*. For this meditation, which is similar to the previous, one imagines a mandala of fire, utters *ram*, and trains in mixing whatever is experienced with the aspect of fire.

The eighth method is the retention mantra of *va*, for which one imagines a water mandala, utters *vam*, and trains in mixing all experience with the aspect of water.

The ninth method is the retention mantra of *la*, for which one imagines an earth mandala, utters *lam*, and trains in mixing all experience with the aspect of earth.

Those last four branches, the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth, are branches of the fifth method (a summary of Taranatha’s *Tara Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 765.1–771.2).

- 68 For enhancement by means of the yoga for defeating demonic forces, one remains in the state of calm abiding. Whenever there are conditions that stimulate the arising of thoughts, one makes the sound of *hum* and cuts the arising itself. In the post-meditation period, one mixes that method with various activities while one continues to rely on the practice of the subsequent yoga. As one moves, for example, from the upper floor of a house to the lower, or from a bright place to a dark one, or from inside to outside, or vice versa, in other words, as one shifts from one time, place, or situation to the next, one is aware of particular changes, or reactions, of mind that manifest. With each change, one makes the sound of the syllable to cut the reaction and mixes the experience with emptiness. The same procedure is applied to experiences such as joy, suffering, attachment, hatred, fear, and so forth: one utters the syllable, cuts the reaction, and mixes the experience with emptiness. Similarly, when one thinks of enemies who have caused one harm, one utters the syllable to cut the reaction; when thinking of one’s friends and relatives, the objects of one’s attachment, one does the same to cut the attachment. One mixes these experiences with one’s own mind and remains in contemplation. Moreover, one exposes oneself to various circumstances—whether

frightening, intimidating, or embarrassing—and applies the same method in order to check the state of one's mind and test one's understanding.

As a result, one comes to the understanding that all appearances, like magical displays, are simply one's own mind. One meditates on compassion for all who cause harm and remains without the slightest attachment to one's body, wealth, opinion, school, tradition, and so forth. Even the smallest thought related to the eight mundane concerns of happiness, suffering, and so on is dissolved into emptiness. In this way one eliminates unfavorable factors, or "demonic forces" (a summary of Tara-natha's *Tara Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 771.2-772.5).

69 Read *rtsa lam sbyang* for *lam sbyang*.

70 The surpassing yoga's preliminary practice of purification consists of the main preliminaries and the branch preliminaries. The main preliminaries consists of five wind techniques, namely, filling, expelling (or "the finest particle"), the branch of earth, the vase-shaped holding, and pressing down (or "stiffening"). Each of these is done in conjunction with a meditation as set forth in the instructions.

The first, filling, has two aspects, with sound and without sound. The first is called "filling with sound" because during the inhalation phase of the technique, as one breathes in slowly but forcefully, the breath makes a rasping sound at the root of the nose. For filling without sound, as one inhales one draws the wind in slowly from the center of the nostrils, without making any sound.

The second, expelling, has the two aspects of expelling with and without sound. Expelling with sound is so called because during one phase of the technique one sends out the breath slowly and, while doing so, makes a rasping noise in the cavity of the nose. For the expelling without sound, one breathes out naturally and slowly. This technique is also known as the "finest particle."

The third, the branch of the earth, entails visualizing the central channel, with its upper tip reaching the crown of the head, and lower tip, the navel. At the crown is a moon disk; at the navel, a sun disk. Entwined around the central channel, from the navel to the throat, is a channel called "demon-free" (*maradarika*), of the nature of the red and white vital essences, that faces downward and resembles a black snake. Synchronized with the different phases of this technique is the visualization of the flow of white vital essence from the moon disk and red vital essence from the sun disk, gradually filling the demon-free channel, and so on.

The fourth, the vase-shaped holding, is so called because, as one breathes in slowly, one draws in the upper wind and draws up the lower wind so that the two winds form a vase-shaped union.

The fifth, pressing down or "stiffening," is so called because after breathing in, while remaining in a nonconceptual state, one manipulates the upper and lower winds gathered at the navel by pressing down, and so on.

The branch preliminaries consist of five wind techniques and meditations that are requisites for methods that use another's body: the action of *ha*; the drawing of *hum*; the drawing of *hrim*; the bow and arrow of *hum* and *pat*; and the four parts.

The action of *ha* entails the visualization of a syllable *ha* that moves upward through the body and is expelled with the breath, as one makes the sound of the syllable in different ways, according to the instructions.

The drawing of *hum* entails the visualization of a syllable *hum* that rises through the

central channel. The movement of the syllable is accompanied by the sound of *hum*, made in different ways during this technique.

The drawing of *brim* involves making the long sound *brim* repeatedly and visualizing a red light, of the nature of wind and warmth, which moves upward and exits the body.

The bow and arrow of *hum* and *pat* entails visualization of a syllable *hum* that rises through the central channel and exits from the body as one exhales with the sound of the syllable. During inhalation one brings to mind the sound *pat*, draws up the lower wind, and so on, through the steps of the technique and visualization.

The “four parts” involves drawing the winds together, manipulating the sphincter muscles, and so forth. The name “four parts” is related to the movement of vital essence.

As for the benefits of these wind techniques, the first, filling, cures cold diseases of the lower part of the body, diseases of the waist area, and dropsy, and it generates heat. Its primary benefit is the eliciting of the experience of emptiness. The second, expelling, cures diseases of the head and eyes, eases constriction in the upper part of the body, mental confusion, and anxiety. Its primary benefit is clarity in meditation, as a result of which the body feels almost weightless. The branch of earth averts premature death and ensures longevity. The vase-shaped holding provides all the above benefits, plus it allows one to float on water and prevents one from being harmed by the four elements. Pressing down or stiffening causes the life-sustaining and downward-voiding winds to unite into a single sphere and cures inner diseases such as poor digestion.

The action of *ha* stabilizes the pristine awareness of joy, cures “heart wind” (a form of depression), and eases constriction in the upper part of the body. The drawing of *hum* stabilizes the pristine awareness of the supreme joy and prevents being harmed by obstacle-creators. Drawing of *brim* stabilizes the pristine awareness of the special joy and cures diseases of the windpipe. The technique of the bow and arrow of *hum* and *pat* stabilizes the innate joy at the crown of the head and performs the functions of the previous three. The last branch, the four parts, stabilizes the white vital essence and mixes the life-sustaining wind and the downward-voiding wind. All of these techniques bind the winds and mind in the central channel, release the knots of the channels, and transform the impure body into a pure dimension. The first five, the main preliminaries, filling and the rest, stabilize the vital essences of the four channel-wheels, and so on. The first four of the second set of five, the action of *ha*, etc., draw up the vital essence, while the fifth holds it (a summary of Taranatha’s *Tara Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 772.6-777.2).

- 71 Having gained stability in the phase of creation (the first yoga), as well as a slight experience of the view through the subsequent yoga, and having purified the channel pathways through wind techniques, one is ready for the main practice of entering the path of the emissary. By relying on the sixty-four acts that arouse and on the wind techniques that have already been cultivated, one brings about, in succession, the descent, retention, reversal, spread, and transformation of the vital essence into pristine awareness. This meditation on the pristine awareness of bliss and emptiness is carried out primarily by means of an action seal, with the auxiliary of the pristine-awareness

seal (a summary of Taranatha's *Tara Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 777.2-777.6).

- 72 The great yoga has three parts: the yoga of indestructible body, the yoga of indestructible speech, and the yoga of indestructible mind. For the yoga of indestructible body, one visualizes oneself as Tara, with the three main channels and four channel-wheels. At the navel, one imagines a red line, sounding *ah*, and hot to the touch. One applies the breath technique of the vase-shaped holding. Fire blazes from that line, rises through the central channel, and pervades the 72,000 channels of the body. The vital essences of these channels collect at the crown of the head, then descend through the central channel, and so on, through the steps of the yoga, until pervasive bliss arises.

For the yoga of indestructible speech, one visualizes oneself as for the yoga of indestructible body. At the navel is a lotus, as described in the instructions. At the corolla is a radiant syllable *tam* with a tiny sphere on top that resounds with *ah*. As one exhales, the sphere, the essence of wind, separates from the syllable. The sphere resounds with *om*, like the buzzing of bees, as it ascends through the central channel, exits the body, and pervades the entire universe. The pure essences of the universe and all beings become nectar and are absorbed into this sphere of light. Then the sphere enters the body with the sound of *hum*, like the buzzing of bees, and so on, through the steps of the visualization, until the sphere, resounding with *ah*, finally settles above the navel syllable.

For the yoga of indestructible mind, one visualizes oneself as for the yogas of indestructible body and speech. At the center of the channel-wheel of phenomena at the heart is a union of sun and moon inside of which rests a sphere that radiates light of five colors. One manipulates the winds as set forth in the instructions (a summary of Taranatha's *Tara Tantra Manual of Instructions for the Practice*, pp. 777.6-779.6).

- 73 Read *rtsa lam sbyangs* for *rtsal ma sbyangs*.
- 74 *King of Yogini Tantras: The Ultimate Essence of Tara, Origin of All Rites*, Toh. 448, vol. Ca. The citation is found at pp. 313.7-314.1 (TBRC digital form).
- 75 Sixty-four acts that arouse (*skul byed byed pa drug cu rtsa bzhi*) refers to the activation of the vital essence (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).
- 76 Descent (*dbab pa*), retention (*bzung ba*), reversal (*zlog pa*), and spread (*khyab pa*) refer to the descent of the vital essence from the crown of the head; the preventing of its emission as semen; the reversing of its course; and the spreading of it throughout the channels of the body in order to experience bliss.
- 77 See Chapter 8, section entitled “The Sixth” in “The Hevajra Completion Phase.”
- 78 The bliss-sustaining channel-wheel (*bde skyong gi 'khor lo*) is the channel-wheel at the secret place; the emanation channel-wheel (*sprul pa'i 'khor lo*), the navel channel-wheel; and the great-bliss channel-wheel (*bde chen gyi 'khor lo*), the channel-wheel of the head. Here, the “egg of ignorance” (*ma rig pa'i sgo nga*) likely stands for the channel-wheel of the heart whose knots are the most difficult to release. However, we have not found a textual source that explains this term.

CHAPTER 11: THE KEY ELEMENTS

- 1 The three isolations (*dben pa gsum*) are the isolation of body, that of voice, and that of mind. See Chapter 7, section entitled “The Arya [Nagarjuna] Tradition.”
- 2 See Chapter 7, n. 24.
- 3 For an enumeration of the four empties (*stong pa bzhi*), see Chapter 6, n. 42.
- 4 Bokar Rinpoché suggests reading *mtha*’ for *thabs*. The outer method refers to the consort, as opposed to the inner method, the practice of the yoga of the winds, vajra recitation, etc.
- 5 In the triad of channels, winds, and vital essences, the channels are described as stationary (*gnas pa*); the winds, as moving (*g.yo ba/ rgyu ba*); and the vital essences, as arrayed (*bkod pa*). See Gyalwa Yang-gönpa’s *Secret Description of the Vajra Body*; and Kongtrul’s *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra* (English translation), pp. 172-184.
- 6 To achieve proficiency in the empty enclosures of body and channels (*lus dang rtsa’i stong ra*) means to train in imagining that one’s body in the form of the deity and its channels are hollow.
- 7 The vase-shaped holding of the winds (*ylung bum pa can, kumbhaka*) involves inhaling the upper “male” wind through the nostrils and drawing up the lower “female” wind by contracting the sphincter muscles. As a result, these two winds meet and merge at the navel region, forming a vase-like shape, and are held there. Minor, middling, and great vase-shaped holdings are spoken of: the first is reached when one can easily hold the breath for thirty-two of the prescribed units of time; the middling, for forty-eight; and the great, for sixty.
 The four aspects of the technique (*sbyor ba bzhi ldan*) may refer to the four phases in vase-shaped holding: inhalation, closed holding, exhalation, and remaining empty; or filling (*dgang ba*), pressing down (*gzhil ba*), pressing down tightly (*skyil ba*), and drawing up (*dren pa*).
 For more on this subject, see Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s *Yantra Yoga, The Tibetan Yoga of Movement, A Practical Commentary on Vairochana’s “The Union of the Sun and Moon Yantra.”*
- 8 The *a*-stroke (*a shad*) is the stroke indicating divisions into phrases, verses, etc., of the *lantsa* script. This stroke upside-down, a fine triangle with an elongated tip, is the form in which the fire element is imagined four finger-widths below the navel in the inner-fire practice.
- 9 *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 417), vol. Nga, ff. 9b7-10a1.
- 10 Joy-free joy (*dga’ bral dga’ ba*) refers to the joy devoid of attachment.
- 11 *Indestructible Garland Tantra* (Toh. 445), vol. Ca, f. 231b4-5.
- 12 See Wayman, *Yoga of the Guhyasamāja Tantra*, pp. 283-284.
- 13 *Indestructible Garland Tantra* (Toh. 445), vol. Ca, f. 231b3-4. The wording differs slightly from the *IOK* version.

- 14 *rDo rje snying 'grel*. Most likely Vajragarbha's *Commentary Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 1180), vol. Ka. Citation not found.
- 15 Saroruha's *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 1181), vol. Ka, ff. 128b7-129a1.
- 16 *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 1186), vol. Ga, f. 89b1. This work is listed under the author's name of Yashobhadra (sNyan grags bzang po). The quoted line is found within Naropa's discussion of the different types of tantric consorts, one of which is called *chandali*, the inner fire.
- 17 Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802), vol. Ngi, f. 52a6-b1.
- 18 According to Nagabodhi, these words mean that practitioners who have not heard the instructions on self-consecration directly from a master will merely exhaust themselves by going through the stages of studying, reflecting, and meditating on the mahayana sutras and on the natural tantras such as the action tantra. Their efforts will yield no fruit (Nagabodhi's *Explanation of the Five Stages: The Garland of Jewels*, Toh. 1840, vol. Chi, f. 117a5).
- 19 Aryadeva's *Analysis of the Stages of Self-Consecration* (Toh. 1805), vol. Ngi, f. 112a7.
- 20 See Aryadeva's *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice* (Toh. 1803), vol. Ngi, f. 87a2-3.
- 21 Aryadeva's *Analysis of the Stages of Self-Consecration* (Toh. 1805), vol. Ngi, f. 113a2-3.
- 22 Here, "phantom display" (*sgyu ma*) refers to a vision—of horses, people, houses, and so forth—created by a magician by means of incantations with the support of objects such as pieces of wood and pebbles.
- 23 Here, "mirage" (*smig rgyu*) refers to a vision of a pool of water on a field or road, usually occurring at midday in hot summer, due to the effect of strong sunlight striking the ground.
- 24 A city of *gandharvas* (*dri za'i grong khyer*) is a concentration of *gandharvas* or scent-eaters that forms a "settlement" complete with buildings and inhabitants, appearing and then disappearing after a few days, or a few moments, without leaving any trace.
- 25 Munishribhadra's *Brief Explanation of the Five Stages: Enchanting the Yogin's Mind* (Toh. 1813), vol. Ngi, f. 185b3-5.
- 26 Read *smra ba nyid* for *smra ba ba nyid*.
- 27 The way of the perfections (*phar phyin theg pa*) refers to the universal way or *mahayana*.
- 28 *Transcendent Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses* (Toh. 12), vol. Ka, f. 9b1-3; TBRC, W22084, vol. 918, p. 18.1.
- 29 *Transcendent Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses* (Toh. 12), vol. Ka, f. 23a1-7; TBRC, W22084, vol. 918, p. 45.1.
- 30 *Samvarodaya Tantra* (Toh. 373), vol. Kha, f. 310b1-2. The wording differs from the IOK version.

- 31 *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations*, f. 24b3 (Dharma Chakra edition, Rumtek).
- 32 Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802), vol. Ngi, ff. 52b6-53a1. The wording differs slightly from that of *IOK*.
- 33 "Good disciples" (*slob ma bzang po*) refers to practitioners who have attained the stage of the full culmination of light. Once they have attained the pristine awareness of total emptiness, they are introduced to the form of the enjoyment dimension of all buddhas endowed with major and minor marks (Munishribhadra's *Brief Explanation of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1813, vol. Ngi, f. 184b1).
- Both Lakshmi and Samayavajra state that a "good disciple" refers to the jewel-like person (*rin chen lta bu'i gang zag*), one of the four kinds of disciples (Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, f. 251b1; Samayavajra's *Commentary on Difficult Points of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1841, vol. Chi, f. 181b5).
- A jewel devoid of faults and endowed with many fine qualities has an excellent and unchanging nature and provides the source for whatever is needed or desired. Similarly, a person deemed "jewel" maintains pure ethics, is learned in many sutras and tantras, perseveres in what is wholesome, exhibits great wisdom, and is of pure mind. Accompanied by these qualities, he or she acquires knowledge and then effectively teaches others. The jewel is the best type of student (Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge: Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, English translation, p. 291).
- 34 Read *bshad* for *bzhd*.
- 35 For an enumeration of the three or four empties (*stong pa gsum mam bzhi*), see above, Chapter 6, n. 42.
- 36 Full culmination (*nyer thob*) stands for the third empty; and luminous clarity (*'od gsal*), the fourth empty.
- 37 Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802), vol. Ngi, f. 52b4-5.
- 38 The consciousness triad (*rnam shes gsum po*), or three consciousnesses, refers to consciousness (*rnam shes, citta*), subjective mind (*gid, citta*), and ignorance (*ma rig pa, avidyā*); or light, increase of light, and culmination of light.
- 39 Nagabodhi explains that the three consciousnesses, accompanied by their winds, enter luminous clarity. Then, through the sequence of full culmination, and so forth, they manifest as the body of the deity, which is of the nature of mind. In that way arises the body of the yogin, that is to say, the body of pristine awareness. That alone is the illusory body, the aggregate that is of the nature of illusion; in other words, it is the pristine-awareness body of the nature of mind, the hidden meaning (Nagabodhi's *Explanation of the Five Stages: The Garland of Jewels*, Toh. 1840, vol. Chi, f. 119a3-5).
- 40 Naropa's *Elucidation Summary of the Five Stages* (Toh. 2333), vol. Zhi, f. 277a2-3. This text is found in the section of the general teachings of highest yoga tantras, which also includes the mystic songs of awakened adepts.
- 41 Read *rlung sems tsam gyi* for *rlung sems tsam gyis*.
- 42 Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802), vol. Ngi, ff. 52b6-53a1. The wording differs slightly from that of *IOK*.

- 43 Lakshmi explains that the nature of the illusory body is like that of a mirror-reflection: although the reflection appears distinctly, it cannot be said to be that object itself or something other than that. It cannot be grasped yet is clearly visible. In the same way is described the nature of the illusory body. Moreover, its colors are like those of a rainbow: just as a rainbow cannot be grasped yet beautifies the sky with its colors, likewise the illusory body appears in distinct colors. Its ubiquitousness is like the moon on water: just as the single moon in the sky can appear on any water surface—on lakes, rivers, oceans, the water in vases, and so forth—likewise, the illusory body appears as the lord of the mandala and as the entire mandala display (Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, f. 251a3-6).
- 44 The illusory body is illustrated by twelve examples of which three are the main ones: the image in a mirror, the rainbow, and the moon's reflection on water. Kongtrul explains that, just as an image in a mirror is complete in an instant, the body or the mandala is complete in an instant. The moment the image appears in a clear mirror, it is not at all separate from the mirror; likewise, the moment the body of the deity manifests from innate bliss and emptiness, it is not at all separate from the experience of bliss and emptiness. Just as the shape and colors of a rainbow appear clearly from tiny drops of water and light, the distinct shape and colors of the deity's body manifest fully from subtle wind and mind although there is no coarse body made of elements. Just as the single moon can appear on all bodies of water, the single body of pristine awareness can manifest anywhere (Kongtrul's *Manual for the Performance of Retreat on the Tantras of the Marpa Tradition: The Jewel Ship*, ff. 8b7-9a4).
- 45 Read *sems bden* (mind isolation) *gyis* for *sems bden gyi*. The forward order (*lugs mthun du*) refers to the dissolution of the eighty conceptions, the manifestation of light, increase of light, culmination of light, up to luminous clarity. The reverse order (*lugs ldog tu*) is the sequence of luminous clarity, culmination, increase, and light.
- 46 Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802), vol. Ngi, ff. 53a1. For the last syllables of the citation, Dergé Tengyur reads *bdag nyid de*; IOK reads *bdag nyid che*. The citation has been translated in accordance with the Dergé Tengyur version.
- 47 Here, *gandharva* (*dri za*) does not refer to scent-eating beings of the spirit class but to beings in the intermediate state between death and rebirth, also called *gandharvas*, since the body of an intermediate-state being is made of wind and mind.
- 48 Lord (*mgon po*) refers to the main deity in union with consort. Read *rang* for *ngang*.
- 49 For these points, see Chapter 9, section entitled "The Tradition of Luipa."
- 50 Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802), vol. Ngi, f. 52b4-5. The wording differs slightly from that of IOK.
- 51 Naropa's *Elucidation Summary of the Five Stages* (Toh. 2333), vol. Zhi, f. 277a2-3.
- 52 The six instructions (*chos drug*) of Naropa are the inner fire, illusory body, dream, luminous clarity, intermediate state, and transference of consciousness.

CHAPTER 12: LUMINOUS CLARITY AND THE COMPLETION PHASE OF UNION

- 1 *Jewel Affinity* (Toh. 4024), vol. Phi, f. 57b1.
- 2 See Chapter 7, nn. 33, 34.
- 3 The mother–luminous clarity (*'od gsal ma*) refers to the luminous clarity of the ground; the son–luminous clarity (*'od gsal bu*), the luminous clarity cultivated during the path by special yogic means.
- 4 *Abhidhana Tantra* (Toh. 369), vol. Ka. Citation not found.
- 5 Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802), vol. Ngi, f. 55a1. The Dergé Tengyur version of the last line of the second verse, which differs slightly from that of *IOK*, reads *de bzhin rjes su gzhig pa'o*.
- 6 The esoteric instructions (*man ngag*) refers to teachings on the stage of actual awakening, or stage of luminous clarity, received orally from the master (Nagabodhi's *Explanation of the Five Stages: The Garland of Jewels*, Toh. 1840, vol. Chi, f. 137b).
- 7 Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802), vol. Ngi, f. 55a1-3.
- 8 According to Lakshmi, the instructions for total apprehension are to meditate on the first vowel, *a*, at the center of the eight-spoked channel-wheel of phenomena. Light from that vowel radiates from head to toe. Upon returning to the heart, the light dissolves the body. One's total being—of a nature that has no point of reference—is apprehended by the contemplation (Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, f. 263b3-5).
Nagabodhi explains total apprehension in this way: Having imagined the vowel *a* (which represents the truth of no-self of all phenomena) at the eight-spoked channel-wheel of phenomena at the heart, one then imagines the light of the syllable radiating throughout the body. The light returns and transforms the heart into ultimate reality. One thereby enters the true limit, ultimate reality. That describes the contemplation of total apprehension (Nagabodhi's *Explanation of the Five Stages: The Garland of Jewels*, Toh. 1840, vol. Chi, f. 137b6-7). See also Chapter 7, nn. 33, 34.
- 9 Lakshmi states that the first vowel, *a*, emanates a circle of light that dissolves the animate and inanimate worlds. Then, the light dissolves oneself. That describes the contemplation of successive destruction (Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, f. 263b5-6).
Nagabodhi explains that the light from the vowel radiates through one's pores and dissolves all beings, who are identical in nature to the lord (the deity). Likewise, the light causes oneself to dissolve. Since all beings disintegrate in the manner of particles splitting up into increasingly finer particles, this meditation is called successive destruction, the ultimate (Nagabodhi's *Explanation of the Five Stages: The Garland of Jewels*, Toh. 1840, vol. Chi, f. 138a1-2). See also Chapter 7, n. 34.
- 10 These lines from Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* provide an example for the contemplation of total apprehension and one for successive destruction. Lakshmi compares the way the breath's vapor quickly vanishes from the surface of a mirror to the yogin repeatedly entering the state of ultimate reality. He points out that just as the reflection of

the autumn moon on a clear pond cannot be said to be the actual moon, nor can it be said to be something else, the luminous clarity present in the minds of oneself and others cannot be described in words (Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, f. 263b6).

Similarly, Nagabodhi compares the autumn moon reflected on a clear pond to the yogin's practice of the successive destruction; and the way the vapor of the breath on the surface of a mirror vanishes in an instant to the stage of total apprehension in which the yogin, in each instant, enters the true limit, luminous clarity (Nagabodhi's *Explanation of the Five Stages: The Garland of Jewels*, Toh. 1840, vol. Chi, f. 138a1-5).

- 11 *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 443), vol. Ca, f. 154b4-5.
- 12 Lakshmi explains that the first sign, resembling a mirage (*smig rgyu*), manifests through the dissolution of earth into water; the second, like smoke (*du ba*), through the dissolution of water into fire; the third, like fireflies (*mkha' snang/ srin bu me khyer*), through the dissolution of fire into wind; and the fourth, like the flame of an oil lamp (*mar me*), through the dissolution of wind into consciousness. Through the sequential dissolution of the three phases of light arises the fifth sign, luminous clarity like a cloudless sky (*sprin med nam mkha'*) (Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, f. 261b5-6).
- 13 The way of characteristics (*mtshan nyid theg pa*) sets forth the eight freedoms (*rnam thar bryad*) as follows: the freedom of viewing external forms with the recognition of the inner consciousness as being form (*nang shes pa gzugs can tu 'du shes pas phyi rol gyi gzugs la lta ba'i rnam thar*); the freedom of viewing external forms with the recognition of the inner consciousness as being without form (*nang gzugs can ma yin par 'du shes pas phyi rol gyi gzugs la lta ba'i rnam thar*); the freedom of dwelling in completion after having actualized the body through its nature of beauty (*sdug pa'i rnam thar te yid du 'ong ba'i rang bzhin lus kyis mngon sum du byas te rdzogs par gnas pa'i rnam thar*); the freedom of infinite space (*nam mkha' mtha' yas kyi rnam thar*); the freedom of infinite consciousness (*rnam shes mtha' yas kyi rnam thar*); the freedom of nothing whatsoever (*ci yang med pa'i rnam thar*); the freedom of neither discernment nor non-discernment (*'du shes med 'du shes med min gyi skye mched rnam thar*); the freedom of cessation of discernment and sensation (*'du shes dang 'tshor ba 'gog pa'i rnam thar*).
- 14 This seems to indicate the contemplation in which the impure illusory body vanishes by means of either of the two contemplations; then, as union is attained, the illusory body is present as luminous clarity. See Wayman's *Yoga of the Guhyasamaja Tantra*, p. 280.
- 15 Read *rtsol ba* for *rtsol pa*.
- 16 Read *'byung* for *'gyur*.
- 17 The citation was not found in either the *Samputa Tantra* (Toh. 381) or the *Samputa Tilaka Tantra* (Toh. 382).
- 18 Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802), vol. Ngi, f. 56a1-2.
- 19 Lakshmi writes that whoever understands that the relative and the ultimate are inseparable

arable will attain the state of union. As the scripture *Mother of All Buddhas* states: Form is emptiness. Emptiness is form. Emptiness is not other than form. Form is not other than emptiness (Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, f. 270b2-6).

- 20 Here, "subject and object" likely refer to changeless bliss and emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects, respectively; and their "two purities" (*dag pa gnyis*), the intrinsic purity and the purity acquired through the elimination of adventitious stains.
- 21 Nagarjuna's *Five Stages*, Toh. 1802, vol. Ngi, f. 55a3-5. The first line of the Tibetan text (line three of the translation) has been translated in accordance with the Derge Tengyur version, which reads *gzugs bcas 'od zer de dang de*. IOK reads *rang bzhin bcas 'od de dang de*.
- 22 Nagabodhi explains these words in the following way: When the yogin wishes to accomplish the welfare of beings, at that time, by becoming the chief of one of the five families of buddhas, he emanates the light rays particular to the buddha. "Consisting of wind and consciousness" refers to the stage of the body of the deity, which is of the nature of mind; in other words, to the stage of self-consecration. Having generated through that a rainbow-like body (i.e., emanating five lights), one carries out whatever benefits others with that body and its lights, in other words, "the lights . . . bring about beings' welfare."

Luminous clarity is the basis from which everything arises. From the all-empty, the very nature of luminous clarity, unpolluted by emotional afflictions such as attachment, this body of the deity manifests for the benefit of beings and shifts suddenly in response to their needs. That is compared to a fish that springs from a crystal clear stream in search of food and is capable of moving through water in a quick and sudden way (a summary of Nagabodhi's *Explanation of the Five Stages: The Garland of Jewels*, Toh. 1840, vol. Chi, f. 138b2-6).

Lakshmi explains that "consisting of wind and consciousness" refers to the union of the cessation of winds and the absence of consciousnesses (i.e., the three lights). He further states that, just as a fish suddenly springs from a stream in autumn, "the net of magical illusions," that is, the lord together with his entourage, due to previous aspirations, manifests from luminous clarity devoid of the one hundred and sixty conceptions that are of impure and pure natures. Moreover, the body that arises from luminous clarity in order to benefit beings is the great seal. It is so called since it imparts joy, i.e., the mudra, to the great collection of beings (a summary of Lakshmi's *Elucidation of the Meaning of the Five Stages*, Toh. 1842, vol. Chi, f. 264a4-b5).

- 23 Read *rdo rje 'chang* for *rdo rje 'char*.
- 24 Aryadeva's *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice* (Toh. 1803), vol. Ngi.

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Black Yamari Tantra

Kṣṇayamāritantra

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Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ja, ff. 164a-167b (Toh. 469)

Black Yamari Tantra: Bodies, Voices, and Minds of All Transcendent Ones

Sarvatathāgata kāyavāk citta kṣṇayamārināmatantra

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rgyud

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Black Yamari: The Tantra That Accomplishes All By Means of the Wheel of the Black Enemy

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Brief Presentation of the [Kalachakra] Initiation

Sekodeśa

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Buddhakapala Tantra: King of Yogini Tantras

Śrībuddhakapāla nāma yoginītantrarāja

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mchog ces bya ba'i rgyud phyi ma

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Tantrarājaśrīlaghusaṃvara

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Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 260a-304a (Toh. 430)

Chatuḥpitha Tantra: King of Yoginis Tantras

Catuḥpithamahāyoginītantrarāja

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Circle of the Sun: King of Tantras (part of Rali tantras)

Śrīsūryacakratantrarāja

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Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, ff. 227b-229a (Toh. 397)

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mNgon brjod phyi ma/ Phag mo mngon par brjod pa bshad pa'i rgyud phyi ma las

phag mo mngon par byang chub pa zhes bya ba

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bsam gyis mi khyab pa phag mo mngon par 'byung ba'i rgyud las rgyud phyi ma
rdzogs rim bstan pa'i le'u ste gnyis pa rdzogs so
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Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra

(Sanskrit not given in Toh.)

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Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 148a-157b (Toh. 443)

Continuation of the Kalachakra Tantra: The Essence of the Tantra

Śrīkālacakratantrottaratantrahṛdaya nāma

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snying po zhes bya ba

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Essence of the Great Seal

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bdag

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Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations

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Vajraśekharamahāguhyayogatantra
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Indestructible Tent Tantra

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[*Rali Tantra of*] *the Glorious Body, Voice, and Mind*

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Red Yamari Tantra

Raktayamāritantra
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Samputanāmamahātantra
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Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, ff. 73b-158b (Toh. 381)

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dPal zla gsang thig le zhes bya ba'i gyud kyi rgyal po

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Summation of Essential Principles

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Transcendent Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses

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Samājaparamārthasarvakarmodaya nāma tārāyoginītantrarāja

Phrin las thams cad 'byung ba'i sgrol ma 'dus pa don dam pa zhes bya ba rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud kyi rgyal po

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 286b-295a (Toh. 448)

The Ultimate Essence of the Origin of All Rites

Samājaparamārthasarvakarmodaya uttaratantrarāja

Phrin las thams cad 'byung ba 'dus pa don dam pa las phyi ma'i rgyud kyi rgyal po

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 295a-309a (Toh. 449)

Vajrabhairava Tantra/ Glorious Great Vajrabhairava Tantra

Śrīvajramahābhairava nāma tantra

dPal rdo rje 'jigs byed chen po'i rgyud

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Vajrabhairava Tantra/ Shrivajrabhairava Kalpa Tantra

Śrīvajrabhairavakalpa tantrarāja

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*Vajrachatuhpitha Tantra. See Chatuhpitha Tantra.**Vajradaka Tantra*

Vajradākatantranāmamahātantrarāja

rGyud kyi rgyal po chen po dPal rdo rje mkha' 'gro zhes bya ba

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Kha, ff. 1b-125a (Toh. 370)

*Yamari Tantras. See Black Yamari; Red Yamari.**Yoginisancharya Tantra*

Yoginīsañcāryatantra

rNal 'byor ma'i kun tu spyod pa

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TREATISES*Abhayākara Gupta**Awn of Esoteric Instructions: Extensive Commentary on the Samputa, King of Tantras*

Saṃputatantrarājaṭīkāmnāyamañjarī

Man ngag snye ma/ dPal yang dag par sbyor ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po'i rgya cher 'grel
pa man ngag gi snye ma

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Commentary on the Five Stages: Moonlight

Pañcakramamatiṭīkācandraprabhā nāma

Rim pa lnga pa'i dgongs 'grel zla ba'i 'od zer zhes bya ba

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Garland of the Complete Yogas

Niṣpannayogāvalī

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dKyil 'khor gyi cho ga rdo rje phreng ba

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Āryadeva

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Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice

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Single Tree Commentary on Difficult Points of the Glorious Chatuhpitha and Explanation of the Eight Topics Applied to the Inner Meaning

(Sanskrit not given in Toh.)

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Analysis of the Sequence of Visualization

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Guide to the Means of Self-Attainment

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Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Di, ff. 1b-17b (Toh. 1853)

Sadhana called Samantabhadra

Samantabhadra nāma sādhana

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Vital Essence of Liberation

Muktitilaka

Grol ba'i thig le

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Illuminating Lamp: Large Commentary [on the Guhyasamāja Tantra]

Pradīpodyotanānāmāṭikā

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Treatise on Valid Cognition

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Commentary on Difficult Points [of the Hevajra Tantra]: Kaumudī

Kaumudīpañjikānāma

Kau mu di zhes bya ba'i dka' 'grel

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Commentary on the Five Stages of Chakrasamvara (an autocommentary)

Śrīcakrasaṃvarapañcakramavṛtti

dPal 'khor lo sdom pa'i rim pa lnga pa'i 'grel pa

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Wa, ff. 227b-233a (Toh. 1435)

Five Stages of Chakrasamvara

Śrīcakrasaṃvarapañcakrama

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Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Wā, ff. 224b-227a (Toh. 1433)

Synopsis of the Initiation Procedure for the Glorious Chakrasamvara

Śrīcakrasaṃvaraṣekaparakriyopadeśa

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Indrabhūti

Innately Existent

Sahajasiddhi

lHan cig skyes grub

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Zhi, ff. 1b-4a (Toh. 2260)

Jālandhara

Sadhana of Hevajra/ Vajra Lamp: A Brief and Correct Explanation of the Hevajra

Sadhana

Hevajrasādhana vajrapradīpa nāma ṭippanīśuddha

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Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Nya, ff. 73a-96a (Toh. 1237)

Jetāri

Four Essential Principles of Chatuhpitha

(Sanskrit not given in Toh.)

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Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ya, ff. 163a-167a (Toh. 1620)

Jñānapāda. *See* Buddhaśrījñāna.

Kṛṣṇā (Kṛṣṇācāryā)

Four Stages

(Sanskrit not given in Toh.)

Rim pa bzhi pa

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Illumination of the Secret Essential Principle

Guhyatattvaparakāśa

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Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Wā, ff. 349a-355b (Toh. 1450)

Olapati. See Kṛṣṇa, *Four Stages*.

Vital Essence of Spring

Vasantatilaka

dPyid kyi thig le

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Wā, ff. 298b-306b (Toh. 1448)

Lūipa (Lūipada/ Lūyipada)

Sequence of Visualization of the Glorious Lord [*Chakrasamvara*]

Śrībhagavadabhisamaya

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Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Wa, ff. 186b-193a (Toh. 1427)

Maitreya

Jewel Affinity

Ratnagotravibhāgamahāyānottaratantraśāstra

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Dg.T. Sems tsam, vol. Phi, ff. 54b-73a (Toh. 4024)

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Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Wi, ff. 141b-143a (Toh. 2252)

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Brief Explanation of the Five Stages: Enchanting the Yogin's Mind

Pañcakramārthayogimanoharaṭippaṇī nāma

Rim pa lnga'i don mdor bshad pa rnal 'byor pa'i yid kyi 'phrog ces bya ba

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ngi, ff. 148b-195b (Toh. 1813)

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Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ngi, ff. 1b-11a (Toh. 1796)

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Pañcakrama

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Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ngi, ff. 45a-57a (Toh. 1802)

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Le'u bco brgyad pa'i rgya cher 'grel pa

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Sa, ff. 284a-324a (Toh. 1784)

Practice of the Armpit

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mChan khung gi sbyor ba

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ya, ff. 72b-73b (Toh. 1609)

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 Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi
 dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga
 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ngī, ff. 15b-35a (Toh. 1798)

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Commentary on Difficult Points of the Hevajra Tantra
 Vajrapādasārasaṃgrahapañjikā
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 Pañcakramasaṃgrahaprakāśa
 Rim pa lnga bsodud pa gsal ba
 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Zhi, ff. 276a-278a (Toh. 2333)

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 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Nya, ff. 214a-241b (Toh. 1251)

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 Vimalaprabhānāmamūlatantrāṇusāriṇīdvādaśasāhasrikālaghukālacakratantarājā
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 bsDus pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po dus kyi 'khor lo'i 'grel bshad rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi rjes su
 'jug pa stong phrag bcu gnyis pa dri ma med pa'i 'od
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Rāhulaguhyā (Rāhulabhadra)
Sadhana of Hevajra called Luminous
 Prakāśa nāma śrīhevajrasādhana
 dPal kye rdo rje'i sgrub thabs rab tu gsal ba zhes bya ba
 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Nya, ff. 96a-126b (Toh. 1238)

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 Zung du 'jug pa gsal ba zhes bya ba'i dbang gi bya ba
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Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Nya, ff. 194b-196a (Toh. 1246)

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Śrīkr̥ṣṇayamārimahātantrarājapañjikāratnapradīpa

dPal gshin rje dgra nag po'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po'i dka' 'grel rin po che'i sgron
ma

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Bi, ff. 124a-172b (Toh. 1919)

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